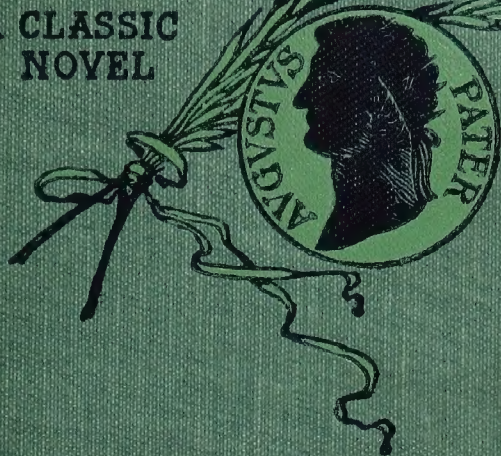


DION AND THE SIBYLS

A CLASSIC
NOVEL



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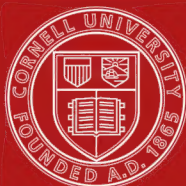
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DION AND THE SIBYLS

A CLASSIC NOVEL

BY

MILES GERALD KEON



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

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PREFACE TO NEW EDITION.

Dion and the Sibyls comes into direct comparison with *Ben-Hur*. Both get their interest from the coming of the Saviour; in both, Rome and Jerusalem are the chief localities.

General Wallace's hero is a Jew; Keon's a young Roman noble. Both plots are fascinating, and the descriptions of historical places and personages brilliant and scholarly; but *Dion* is richer in sentiment and sounder in thought.

Dion has passages unsurpassed in our literature. Of wonderful power are: The speech of the gladiator; the demons that served Piso's wife; the taming of the horse in the arena; the symposium before Augustus; the conveyance of the treasure to Germanicus Cæsar; the rescue of Agatha from the power of Tiberius; the meeting with Christ and St. John; the dancing of the daughter of Herodias before Herod.

Strangely enough there is a remarkable likeness in the careers of the two authors. Keon, born in Ireland and educated at Stonyhurst, was a soldier with the French in Algiers, a lawyer, a writer, and in his last years a government official. Wallace was a soldier, afterwards a diplomat, and has become a litterateur.

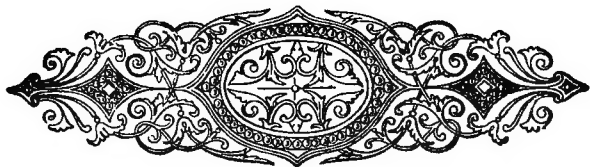
Ben-Hur lay long months untouched upon the publishers' shelves before men awakened to its beauty and power; and who that has read *Dion* will say that it has yet received a tithe of its full measure of justice.

DEDICATION.

I DEDICATE the following work to Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, not only in appreciation of one of the most searching, comprehensive, independent, and indefatigable thinkers, and one of the truest and highest men of genius, of whom it has ever been the lot of his own country and of the English-speaking races to be proud, and the fate of contemporary nations to feel honorably jealous; not only in admiration of a mind which nature made great, and which study has to the last degree cultivated, whose influence and authority have been steadily rising since he first began to labor in literary fields more varied than almost any into which ONE person had previously dared to carry the efforts of the intellect; but still more as an humble token of the grateful love which I feel in return for the faithful and consistent friendship and the innumerable services with which a great genius and a great man has honored me during twenty years.

MILES GERALD KEON.

PARIS, Jan. 18, 1870.



DION AND THE SIBYLS.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a fair evening in autumn, toward the end of the year eleven of our Lord. Augustus Cæsar was a white-haired, olive-complexioned, and somewhat frail-featured, though stately man of more than seventy-three. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the face of the first Napoleon recalled to the minds of antiquaries and students of numismatic remains the lineaments engraved upon the extant coins of Augustus. Indeed, at this moment there is in the Vatican a beautiful marble bust in excellent preservation, representing one of these two emperors as he was while yet young; and this bust almost invariably produces a curious effect upon the stranger who contemplates it for the first time. "That is certainly a beautiful, artistic work," he says, "but the likeness is hardly perfect."

"Likeness of whom?" replies some Italian friend. "Of the emperor," says the stranger. "*Sicuro!* But which emperor?" asks the Italian, smiling. "Of course, the first," says the visitor. "But that repre-

sents Augustus Cæsar, not Napoleon Bonaparte," is the answer. Whereupon the stranger, who, a moment before had very justly pronounced the resemblance to Bonaparte to be hardly perfect, exclaims, not less justly, "What an amazing likeness to Napoleon!" That sort of admiring surprise is intelligible. Had the bust been designed as an image of the great modern conqueror, there had been something to censure. But the work which, at one and the same time, delineates the second Cæsar, and yet after 1800 years recalls to mind the first Napoleon, has become a curious monument indeed.

The second Roman emperor, however, had not a forehead so broad and commanding nor so marble-smooth as Napoleon's, and the whole countenance, at the time when our narrative begins, offered a more decisively aquiline curve, with more numerous and much thinner lines about the mouth. Still, even at the age which he had then reached—in the year eleven of our Lord—he showed traces of that amazing beauty which had enchanted the whole classic world in the days of his youth. Three years more, and his reign and life were to go down in a great, broad, calm, treacherous sunset together.

After the senate had rewarded the histrionic and purely make-believe moderation of its master—and in truth its destroyer—by giving to one who had named himself *Princeps* the greater name of Augustus, the former title, like a left-off robe, too good to be thrown away, was carefully picked up, brushed into all its gloss, and appropriated by a second performer. We allude, of course, to Drusus Tiberius Claudius Nero, the future emperor,

best known by his second name of Tiberius. The first and third names had belonged to his brother also. Tiberius was then "Prince and Cæsar," as the new slang of flattery termed him; he was stepson of Augustus and already adopted heir, solemnly *designatus*. He was verging upon the close of his fifty-third year of cautious profligacy, clandestine vindictiveness, and strictly-regulated vices. History has not accused him of murdering Agrippa Vespasianus; but had Agrippa survived, he would have held all Tiberius's present offices. Ælius Sejanus, commander of the Prætorian Guards, was occupied in watching the monthly, watching even the daily, decay of strength in the living emperor, and was pandering to the passions of his probable successor. Up to this time Sejanus had been, and still was, thus employed. More dangerous hopes had not arisen in his bosom; he had not yet indulged in the vision of becoming master of the known world—a dream which, some twenty years afterward, consigned him to cruel and sudden destruction. No conspirator, perhaps, ever exercised more craft and patience in preparing, or betrayed more stupidity at last in executing, an attempt at treason on so great a scale. It was forty-six years since Sallust had expired amid the luxuries which cruelty and rapine accumulated, after profligacy had first brought him acquainted with want.

Ovid had just been sent into exile at Temesvar in Turkey—then called Tomos in Scythia. Cornelius Nepos was ending his days in the personal privacy and literary notoriety in which he had lived. Virgil had been dead a whole generation; so had Tibullus; Catullus, half a century; Propertius, some twenty years; Horace and

Mæcenas, about as long. The grateful master of the *curiosa felicitas verborum* had followed in three weeks to—not the grave, indeed, but—the urn, the patron whom he had immortalized in the first of his odes, the first of his epodes, the first of his satires, and the first of his epistles; and the mighty sovereign upon whose youthful court those three characters—a wise, mild, clement, yet firm minister, a glorious epic poet, and an unsurpassed lyrist—have reflected so much and such enduring lustre, had faithfully and unceasingly lamented their irreparable loss. Lucius Varius was the fashionable poet, the laureate of the day; and Mæcenas being removed, Tiberius sought to govern indirectly, as minister, all those matters which he did not control directly and immediately, as one of the two Cæsars whom Augustus had appointed. Velleius Paterculus, the cavalry colonel, or military tribune (chiliarch), a prosperous and accomplished patrician, was beginning to shine at once in letters and at the court. The grandson of Livia, grandson also of Augustus by his marriage with her, but really grandnephew of that emperor—we mean the son of Antonia, the celebrated Germanicus, second and more worthy bearer of that surname—a youth full of fire and genius, and tingling with noble blood—was preparing to atone for the disgraces and to repair the disasters which Quintilius Varus, one year before, amidst the uncleared forests of Germany, had brought upon the imperial arms and the Roman name. Germanicus, indeed, was about to fulfill the more important part of a celebrated classic injunction; he was going to do things worthy to be written, “while the supple courtier of all Cæsars, Paterculus, was endeavoring to *write something*

worthy to be read." Strabo had not long before commenced his system of geography, which, for about thirty years yet to come, was to engage his attention and dictate his travels. Livy, of the "pictured page," who doubtless may be called, next to Tacitus, the most eloquent without being set down as quite the most credulous of classic historians—I venture to say so, *pace* Niebuhr—was over sixty-eight years of age, but scarcely looked sixty. He was even then thoroughly and universally appreciated. No man living had received more genuine marks of honor—not even the emperor. His hundred and forty-two books of Roman history had filled the known world with his praises, a glory which length of days allowed him fully to enjoy. Modern readers appreciate and admire the thirty-five books which alone are left, and linger over the beauties, *quasi stellis*, with which they shine. Yet who knows but these may be among the poorest productions of Livy's genius? A very simple sum in arithmetic would satisfy an actuary that we must have lost the most valuable emanations of the Paduan's great mind. Given a salvage of five-and-thirty out of a hundred and forty-two, and yet the whole of this wreck so marvellous in beauty! surely that which is gone forever must have included much that is equal, probably something far superior to what time has spared.

There is a curious fact recorded by Pliny the younger, which speaks for itself. A Spaniard of Cadiz had, only some five months before the date of our story, journeyed from the ends of the earth to Rome merely to obtain a sight of Livy. There were imperial shows in the forum and hippodrome and circus at the time; there were

racers on foot, and on horseback, and in chariots; fights there were of all kinds—men against wild animals, men against each other; with the sword, with the deadly cestus; wrestling matches, and the dreadful battles of gladiators, five hundred a side; in short, all the glitter and the glories and the horrors of the old classic arena in its culminating days. There was also a strange new Greek fence, since inherited by Naples, and preserved all through the middle ages down to this hour, with the straight, pliant, three-edged rapier, to witness which even ladies thronged with interest and partisanship. But the Spaniard from Gades (Cervantes might surely have had such an ancestor) asked only to be shown Titus Livius. Which in yonder group is Livy? The wayfarer cared for nothing else that Roman civilization or Roman vanity could show him. The great writer was pointed out, and then the traveller, having satisfied the motive which had brought him to Rome, went back to Ostia, where his lugger, if I may so call it, lay (I picture it a kind of "wing-and-wing" rigged vessel); and, refusing to profane his eyes with any meaner spectacle, set sail again for Spain, where his youth had been illumined with the visions presented to a sympathetic imagination by the most charming of classical historians. The Spaniards from an immemorial age are deemed to have been heroes and appreciators of heroes; and no doubt this literary pilgrim, once more at home, recurred many a time, long pondering, to the glorious deeds of the *Fabia Gens*.

How many other similar examples Livy may have recorded for him we moderns cannot say. Before his gaze arose the finished column from the fragments

whereof we have gathered up some scattered bricks and marbles. Niebuhr had to deal with a ruin, and he who ought to have guessed at and reconstructed the plan of it, has contented himself with trying to demolish its form.

Long previously to the date of our tale, Augustus, trembling under the despotism of his wife, Livia, had begun to repeat those lamentations (with which scholars are familiar) for the times when Mæcenas had guided his active day, and Virgil and Horace had beguiled his lettered evenings. Virgil, as is well known, had been tormented with asthma, and ought possibly to have lived much longer but for some unrecorded imprudence. Horace, as is likewise well known, had been tormented with sore eyelids—and with wine; he was “blear-eyed” (*lippus*). Augustus, therefore, used to say wittily, as he placed them on each hand of him at the *symposium*, which had been recently borrowed in Italy from the Greeks, but had not yet degenerated into the debauchery and extravagance into which they afterward sank more and more deeply during successive reigns, “I sit between sighs and tears.”* But he had long lost these so-called sighs and tears at either hand of him. The sighs and tears were now his own.

* *In suspiriis sedeo et in lachrymis.*



CHAPTER II.



UR chronicle commences in Campania, with the Tyrrhenian Sea (now the southerly waters of the Gulf of Genoa) on a traveller's left hand if he looks north. It was a fair evening in autumn, as we have remarked, during that age and state of the world the broad outlines of which we have briefly given. Along the Appian, or, as it long afterward came to be also called, the Trajan Way, the queen of roads, a conveyance drawn by two horses, a carriage of the common hackney description, not unlike one species of the *vet-tura* used by the modern Italians, was rolling swiftly northward between the stage of Minturnæ and the next stage, which was a lonely post-house a few miles south of the interesting town of Formiæ—not *Forum Appii*, or the *Three Taverns*, a place more than fifty miles away in the direction of Rome, and upon the same road.

Inside the carriage were a lady in middle life, whose face, once lovely, was still sweet and charming, and a very pale, beautiful female child, each dressed in a black *ricinium*,* or mourning robe, drawn over the top of the head. The girl was about twelve years old, or a little more, and seemed to be suffering much and grievously. She faced the horses, and on her side sat the lady fanning her and watching her with a look which always spoke love, and now and again anguish. Opposite to them, with his back to the horses, wearing a sort of dark *lacerna*, or thin, light great coat, of costly

* Cicero, *Legg.* ii. 23.

material, but of a fashion which was deemed in Italy at that day either foreign or vulgar, as the case might be, sat a youth of about eighteen. The child was leaning back with her eyes closed. The youth, as he watched her, sighed now and then. At last he put both hands to his face, and, leaning his head forward, suffered tears to flow silently through his fingers. The *lacerna* which he wore was fastened at the breast by two clasps of silver, and girt round his waist with a broad, brown, sheeny leather belt, stamped and traced after some Asiatic mode. In a loop of this belt, at his left side, was secured within its black scabbard an unfamiliar, outlandish-looking, long, straight, three-edged sword, which he had pulled round so as to rest the point before his feet, bringing the blade between his knees, and the hilt, which was gay with emeralds, in front of his chest.

The Romans still very generally went bare-headed,* even out of doors, except that those who continued to wear the toga drew it over their heads as the weather needed, and those who wore the *penula* used the hood of it in the same way. But upon the hilt of the sword we have described the youth had flung a deep-rimmed hat, with a flat top, and one black feather at the side, not stuck perpendicularly into the band, but so trained half round it as to produce a reckless, rakish effect, of which the owner was unconscious.

"Agatha," said the lady, in a low, tender voice, the delicate Greek ring of which was full of persuasion, "look up, beloved child! Your brother and I, at least, are left. Think no more of the past. The gods

* Plutarch in Pompey. Seneca, Epis. 64.

have taken your father, after men had taken his and your inheritance. But our part in life is not yet over. Did not your parents too, in times past—did not we too, I say, lose ours? Did you not know you were probably to live longer than your poor father? Are you not to survive me also? Perhaps soon.”

With a cry of dismay the young girl threw her arms round the lady's neck and sobbed. The other, while she shed tears, exclaimed :

“I thank that unknown power, of whom Dionysius the Athenian, my young countryman, so sublimely speaks, that the child weeps at last! Weep, Agatha, weep; but mourn not mute in the cowardice of despair! Mourn not for your father in a way unbecoming of his child and mine. Mourn not as though indeed you were not ours. My husband is gone forever, but he went in honor. The courageless grief, that canker without voice or tears, which would slay his child, will not bring back to me the partner of my days, nor to you your father. We must not dishearten but cheer your brother Paulus for the battle which is before him.”

“I wish to do so, my mother,” said Agatha.

“When I recover my rights,” broke in the youth at this point, “my father will come and sit among the *lares*, round the ever-burning fire in the *atrium* of our hereditary house, Agatha; and therefore courage! You are ill; but Charicles, the great physician of Tiberius Cæsar, is our countryman, and he will attend you. He can cure almost anything, they say. And if you feel fatigued, no wonder, so help me! *Minime mirum mehercle!* Have we not travelled without intermission, by

land and by sea, all the way from Thrace? But now, one more change of horses brings us to Formiæ, and then we shall be at our journey's end. Meantime, dear child, look up; see yonder woods, and the garden-like shore."

And having first tried in vain to brighten the horn window at the side of the vehicle (glass was used only in the private carriages of the rich), he stood up, and calling over the hide roof of the carriage, which was open in front—the horses being driven from behind—he ordered the coachman to open the panels. The man, evidently a former slave of the family, now their freed-man, quickly obeyed, and descending from his bench, pushed back into grooves contrived to receive them the coarsely-figured and gaudily colored sides of the travelling *carruca*.

"Is the little one better?" he then cried, with the privileged freedom of an old and attached domestic, or of one who, in the far more endearing parlance of classic times, was a faithful *familiaris*—that is, a member of the family. "Is the little one better? The dust is laid now, little one; the evening comes; the light slants; the sun smiles not higher than yourself, instead of burning overhead. See, the beautiful country! See, the sweet land! Let the breeze bring a bloom to your cheeks, as it brings the perfumes to your mouth. Ah! the little one smiles. Fate is not always angry!"

"Dear old Philip!" said the child; and then, turning to her mother, she added,

"Just now, mother, you waked me from a frightful dream. I thought that the man who has our father's estates was dead; but he came from the dead, and was

trying to kill Paulus, my brother there; and for that purpose was striving to wrest the sword from Paulus's hand; and that the man laughed in a hideous manner, and cried out, 'It is with his own sword we will slay him! Nothing but his own sword!'

The old freedman turned pale, and muttered something to himself, as he stood by the side of the vehicle; and while he kept the horses steady, with the long reins in his left hand, glanced awfully toward Paulus.

"Brother," continued the child, "I forget that man's name. What *is* the name?"

"Never mind the name now," said Paulus; "a dead person cannot kill a living one; and that man is not in Italy who will kill me with my own sword, if I be not asleep. Look at the beautiful land! See, as Philip tells you, the beautiful land where you are going to be so happy."

The river Liris, now the Garigliano, flowed all gold in the western sun; some dozens of meadows behind them, between rows of linden-trees, oleanders, and pomegranates, with laurel, bay and long bamboo-like reeds of the *arundo donax*, varying the rich beauty of its banks.* A thin and irregular forest of great contemplative trees; flowerless and sad beech, cornel, alder, ash, hornbeam, and yew towered over savannahs of scented herbs and glades of many-tinted grasses. Some clumps of chestnut-trees, hereafter to spread into forests, but then rare, and cultivated as we cultivate oranges and citrons, stood proudly apart. A vegetation which has partly vanished gave its own physical aspect to an Italy the social conditions of which have vanished altogether;

* *Daphnones, platanones, et æricæ cyparissi.*

and were even then passing, and about to pass, through their last appearances. But much also that we in our days have seen, both there and elsewhere, was there then. The flower or blossom of the pomegranate lifted its scarlet light amidst vines and olives; miles of oleander-trees waved their masses of flame under the tender green filigree of almond groves, and seemed to laugh in scorn at the mourning groups of yew and the bowed head of the dark, widow-like, and inconsolable cypress. All over the leaves of the woods autumn had strewn its innumerable hues. In the west, the sky was hung with those glories which no painter ever reproduced and no poet ever sang; it was one of the sunsets which make all persons of sensibility who contemplate them dumb, by making all that can be said of them worse than useless. A magnificent and enormous villa or country mansion—palace it seemed—showed parts of its walls, glass windows, and Ionic columns, through the woods on the banks of the Liris; and upon the roof of this palace a great company of gilt, tinted, and white statues, much larger than life, in various groups and attitudes, as they conversed, lifted their arms, knelt, prayed, stooped, stood up, threatened, and acted, were glittering above the tree-tops in the many-colored lights of the setting sun.

“Ah! let us stop; let us rest a few moments,” cried the child, smiling through her tears at the smiles of nature and the enchanting beauty of the scene; “only a few moments under the great trees, mother.”

It was a group of chestnuts, a few yards from the side of the road; and beneath them came to join the highway through the meadows, and vineyards, and

forest-land, a broad beaten track from the direction of the splendid villa that stood on the Liris.

Paulus instantly sprang from the *carruca*, and, having first helped his mother to alight, took his sister in his arms and placed her sitting under the green shade. A Thracian woman, a slave, descended mean time from the box, and the driver drew his vehicle to the side of the highway.

While they thus reposed, with no sound about them, as they thought, save the rustle of the leaves, the distant ripple of the waters, and the vehement shrill call of the cicada hidden in the grass near, their destinies were coming. The freedman suddenly held up his hand, and drew their attention by that peculiar sound through the teeth (*st*), which in all nations signifies *listen* !

And, indeed, a distant, dull, vague noise was now heard southward, and seemed to increase and approach along the Appian road. Every eye in our little group of travellers was turned in the direction mentioned, and they could see a white cloud of dust coming swiftly northward. Soon they distinguished the tramp of many horses at the trot. Then, over the top of a hill which had intercepted the view, came the gleam of arms, filling the whole width of the way, and advancing like a torrent of light. The ground trembled ; and, headed by a troop or two of Numidian riders, and then a couple of troops of Batavian cavalry, a thousand horse, at least, of the Prætorian Guards, arrayed, as usual, magnificently, swept along in a column two hundred deep, with a rattle and ring of metal rising treble upon the ear over the continuous bass of the beating hoofs, as the foam floats above the roll of the waves.

The young girl was at once startled from the sense of sickness and grief, and gazed with big eyes at the pageant. Six hundred yards further on a trumpet-note, clear and long, gave some sudden signal, and the whole body instantly halted. From a detached group in the rear an officer now rode toward the front; a loud word or two of command was heard, a slight movement followed, and then, as if the column were some monstrous yellow-scaled serpent with an elastic neck and a black head, the swarthy troops which had led the advance wheeled slowly backward, two instead of five abreast, while the main column simultaneously stretched itself forward on a narrower face, and with a deeper file, occupying thus less than half the width of the road, which they had before nearly filled, and extending much further onward. Meantime the squadrons which had led it continued to defile to the rear; and when their last rank had passed the last of those fronting in the opposite direction, they suddenly faced to their own right, and, standing like statues, lined the way on the side opposite to that where our travellers were reposing, but some forty or fifty yards higher up the road, or more north.

In front of the line of horsemen, who, after wheeling back, had been thus faced to their own right, or the proper left of the line of march, was now collected a small group of mounted officers. One of them wore a steel corselet, a casque of the same metal, with a few short black feathers in its crest, and the *chlamys*, or a better sort of *sagum*, the scarlet mantle of a military tribune, over a black tunic, upon which two broad red stripes or ribbons were diagonally sewn. This costume

denoted him one of the *Laticlavii*, or broad-ribbed tribunes; in other words—although, to judge by the massive gold ring which glittered on the forefinger of his bridle hand, he might have been originally and personally only a knight—he had received either from the emperor, or from one of the two Cæsars then governing with and under Augustus, the senatorial rank.

The chlamys was fastened across the top of his chest with a silver clasp, and the tunic a little lower down with another, both being open below as far as the waist, and disclosing a tight-fitting chain-mail corselet, or shirt of steel rings. The chlamys was otherwise thrown loose over his shoulders, but the tunic was belted round the corselet at his waist by a buff girdle, wherein hung the intricately-figured brass scabbard of a straight, flat, not very long cut-and-thrust sword, which he now held drawn in his right hand. In his belt were stuck a pair of gloves, which seemed to be made of the same material as the girdle; buffalo-skin greaves on his legs and half-boots completed his dress. He was a handsome man, about five-and-thirty years old, brown hair, an open but thoughtful face and an observant eye. He it was who had ridden to the front and given those orders the execution of which we have noticed. He had now returned, and kept his horse a neck or so behind that of an officer far more splendidly attired, who seemed to pay no attention whatever to the little operation that had occurred, but, shading his eyes with one hand from the rays of the setting sun, gazed over the fields toward the villa or mansion on the Liris.

He was clad in the *paludamentum*, the long scarlet cloak of a *legatus* or general, the borders being deeply

fringed with twice-dyed Tyrian purple,* the long folds of which flowed over his charger's haunches. This magnificent mantle was buckled round the wearer's neck with a jewel. His corselet, unlike that of the colonel or tribune already mentioned, was of plate-steel (instead of rings), and shone like a looking-glass, except where it was inlaid with broad lines of gold. He wore a chain of twisted gold around his neck, and his belt as well as the hilt of his sword, which remained undrawn by his side in a silver scabbard, glittered with sardonyx and jasper stones. He had no tunic. His gloves happening, like those of his subordinate, to be thrust into the belt round his waist, left visible a pair of hands so white and delicate as to be almost effeminate. His helmet was thin steel, and the crest was surmounted by a profuse plume of scarlet cock's feathers. But perhaps the most curious particular of his costume was a pair of shoes or half-boots of red leather, the points of the toes turned upward. These boots were encrusted with gems, which formed the patrician crescent, or letter C, on the top of each foot, and then wandered into a fanciful tracery of sparkles up the leg. The stirrups, in which his feet rested, were either of gold or gilt.

The countenance of this evidently important personage was remarkable. He had regular features, a handsome straight nose, eyes half closed with what seemed at first a languid look, but yet a look which, if observed more closely, was almost startling from the extreme attention it evinced, and from the contrast between such an expression and the indolent indifference or superciliousness upon the surface, if I may so

* *Tyria bis tinctoria*, or *dibapha*.—Pliny.

say, of the physiognomy. There was something sinister and cruel about the mouth. He wore no whiskers or beard, but a black, carefully trimmed mustache.

After a steady gaze across the fields in the direction we have already more than once mentioned, he half turned his head toward the tribune, and at the same time, pointing to our travellers, said something. The tribune, in his turn, addressed the first centurion, an officer whose sword, like that of the legatus, was undrawn, but who carried in his right hand a thin wand made of vine-wood. In an instant this officer turned his horse's head and trotted smartly toward our travellers, upon reaching whom he addressed Paulus thus :

"Tell me, I pray you, have you been long here?"

"Not a quarter of an hour," answered Paulus, wondering why such a question was asked.

"And have any persons passed into the road by this pathway?" the centurion then inquired.

"Not since we came," said Paulus.

The officer thanked him and trotted back.

Meanwhile Paulus and his mother and the freedman Philip had not been so absorbed in watching the occurrence and scene just described as to remove their eyes for more than a moment at a time from their dearly-loved charge, the interesting little mourner who had begged to be allowed to rest under the chestnut-trees. It was not so with Agatha herself. The child was at once astonished, bewildered, and enraptured. Had the spectacle and review before her been commanded by some monarch, or rather some magician, on purpose to snatch her from the possibility of dwelling longer amidst

the gloom, the regrets, and the terrors under which she had appeared to be sinking, neither the wonder of the spectacle, nor the amenity of the evening when it occurred, nor the loveliness of the landscape which formed its theatre, could have been more opportunely combined. She had not only never beheld anything so magnificent, but her curiosity was violently aroused.

Paulus exchanged with his mother and the old freedman a glance of intelligence and of intense satisfaction, as they both noted the parted lips and dilated eyes with which the child, half an hour ago so alarmingly ill, contemplated the drama at which she was accidentally assisting.

"That's a rare doctor," whispered Philip, pointing to the general of the Prætorian Guards.

"No doctor," replied Paulus in the same low tones, "could have prescribed for our darling better."

"Paulus," said Agatha, "what are these mighty beings? Are these the genii and the demons of the mistressland, the gods of Italy?"

"They are a handful of Italy's troops, dear," he said.

She looked from her brother to the lady, and then to the freedman, and this last, with a healing instinct which would have done honor to Hippocrates, began to stimulate her interest by the agency of suspense and mystery.

"Master Paulus, and Lady Aglais, and my little one, too," he said, in a most impressive and solemn voice, "these are the genii and these the demons indeed; but I tell you that you have not yet seen all the secret. *Something is going to happen.* Attend to me well! You behold a most singular thing! Are you aware of what

you behold? Yonder, Master Paulus, is the allotted portion of horse for more than three legions: the *justus equitatus*, I say, for a Roman army of twenty thousand men. Yes, I attest all the gods," continued Philip in a low voice, but with great earnestness, and glancing from the brother to the sister as if his prospects in life were contingent upon his being believed in this. "I was at the battle of Philippi, and I aver that yonder is more than the right allotment of horse for three legions. Observe the squadrons; they do not consist of the same arm; and instead of being distributed in bodies of three or four hundred each to a legion, they are all together before you without their legions. Why is that, Master Paulus?"

"I know not," said Paulus.

"Ah!" resumed the freedman, "you know not, but you *will* know presently. Mark that, little Mistress Agatha, and bear in mind that Philip the freedman has said to your brother that he will know all presently."

The child gazed wonderingly at the troops as she heard these mysterious words. "Who are those?" asked she, pointing to the squadrons of those still in column. "Who are those in leather jerkins, covered with the iron scales, and riding the large, heavy horses?"

"Batavians from the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt," answered the freedman, with a mysterious shake of the head.

"And those," pursued she, with increasing interest; "who are those whose faces shine like dusky copper, and whose eyes glitter like the eyes of the wild animals in the arena, when the proconsul of Greece gives the shows? I mean those who ride the small, long-tailed

horses without any saddle-cloths, and even without bridles—the soldiers in flowing dress, with rolls of linen round their heads?”

“They are the Numidians,” replied Philip. “Ah! Rome dreaded those horsemen once, when Hannibal the Carthaginian and his motley hordes had their will in these fair plains.”

As he spoke a strange movement occurred. The general dismounted, and, giving the bridle of his horse to a soldier, began to walk slowly up and down the side of the road. No sooner had his foot touched the ground than the whole of the Numidian squadron seemed to rise like a covey out of a stubble-field; with little clang of arms, but with one short, sharp cry, or whoop, it burst from the high road into the meadow-land. There the evolutions which they performed seemed at first to be all confusion, only for the fact that, although the horsemen had the air of riding capriciously in every direction, crossing, intermingling, separating, galloping upon opposite curves, and tracing every figure which the whim and fancy of each might dictate, yet no two of them ever came into collision. Indeed, fantastic and wild as that rhapsody of manœuvres into which they had broken appeared to be, some principle which was thoroughly understood by every one of them governed their mazy gallop. It was as accurate and exact as some stately dance of slaves at the imperial court.

It was, in short, itself a wild dance of the Numidian cavalry, in which their reinless horses, guided only by the flashing blades and the voices of their riders, manifested the most vehement spirit and a sort of

sympathetic frenzy. These steeds, which never knew the bridle, and went thus mouth-free even into battle—these horses, which their masters turned loose at night into the fields, and which came back bounding and neighing at the first call, were now madly plunging, wheeling, racing and charging, like gigantic dogs at sport. Presently they began to play a strange species of leapfrog. A Numidian boy, who carried a trumpet and rode a pony, or at least a horse smaller and lower than the rest of the barbs (“Berber horses”), suddenly halted on the outside of the mad cavalry whirlpool which had been formed, and flung himself flat at full length upon the back of the diminutive animal. Instantly the whirl, as it circled toward him, straightened itself into a column, and every horseman rode full upon the stationary pony, and cleared both steed and rider at a bound, a torrent of cavalry rushing over the obstruction with wild shouts.

“That is Numidian sport, Master Paulus,” said the freedman; “but there is not a rider among them to be compared to yourself.”

“Certainly I can ride,” said the youth, “but I pretend not to be superior to these Centaurs.”

“Are these, then, the Centaurs I have heard of?” asked Agatha; “are these the wild powers?”

The hubbub had prevented her, and all with her, from noticing something. Before an answer could be given, the Numidians had returned to the highway as suddenly as they had quitted it, and the noise of their dance was succeeded by a pause of attention. The general was again on horseback, and our travellers perceived that two litters, one of carved ivory and gold,

the other of sculptured bronze, borne on the shoulders of slaves, were beside them.

Two gentlemen on foot had arrived with the litters along the broad pathway already noticed, and a group of attendants at a little distance were following.

This new party were now halting with our travellers beneath the far-spreading shade of the same trees. In the ivory litter reclined a girl of about seventeen, dressed in a long *palla* of blue silk, a material then only just introduced from India, through Arabia and Egypt, and so expensive as to be beyond the reach of any but the richest class. Her hair, which was of a bright gold color, was dressed in the fashionable form of a helmet, and was inclosed behind in a gauze net. She wore large earrings, of some jewel, a gold chain, in every ring of which was set a gem, and scarlet shoes embroidered with pearls. The lady in the bronze litter was attired in the *stola* of a matron, with a *cyclas*, or circular robe, thrown back from the neck, and a tunic of dark purple which descended to her feet. Her brown hair was restrained by bands, *vittæ*, which had an honorable significance among the Roman ladies. She seemed somewhat past thirty years of age; she had a very sweet, calm and matronly air; her countenance was as beautiful in features and general effect as it was modest in its tone and character.

Her companion,* in the litter of ivory and gold, was not more than half her age, was even more beautiful, with an immense wreath of golden hair, and with large blue eyes, darkening to the likeness of black as she

* Mother of Caligula, and grandmother of Nero by her daughter Agrippina Julia.

gazed earnestly upon any object. But she had a less gentle expression. Frequently her look was penetrating, brief, impatient, sarcastic, disdainful. She had a bewitching smile, however, and her numerous admirers made Italy echo with their ravings.

Lucius Varius, said the fashionable world, was at that very time engaged upon a kind of Sapphic ode, of which she was to be the subject.

Scarcely had these litters or palanquins arrived and halted, when the general officer dismounted once more, and walked quickly toward the spot with his helmet in his hand. At a few yards' distance he stopped, and first bowed low to the elder of the two gentlemen who had accompanied the litters on foot, and then, almost entirely disregarding the other gentleman, made an obeisance not quite so long or so deep to the ladies. The man whom so splendid a personage as the legatus, wearing his flaming paludamentum, and at the head of his troops, thus treated with so obsequious a veneration, did not return the salute except by a slight nod and a momentary, absent-minded smile. His gaze had been riveted upon our travellers, and chiefly upon the youth and his young, suffering sister, upon both of whom, after it had quickly taken in Philip the freedman, the Thracian woman, and the Athenian lady, it rested long—longest and last upon Agatha.

"Sejanus," said he finally, "who are these?"

"I never saw them until just now, my commander and Cæsar; they were here when we halted, and while we waited for our master, the favorite of the gods, these travellers seemed to be resting where you behold them."

"As those gods favor me," said the other, "this is a fine youth. Can we not *edit** him? And yonder girl—have you ever seen, my Sejanus, such eyes? But she is deadly pale. Are you always thus pale, pretty one, or are you merely ill? If but ill, as I guess, Charicles, my Greek physician, shall cure you."

Before this man had even spoken, the moment, indeed, when first his eyes fell upon her, Agatha had sidled close to her mother; and while he was expressing himself in that way to Sejanus, she returned his gaze with panic-stricken, dilated eyes, as the South American bird returns that of the reptile; but when he directly questioned her, she, reaching out her hand to Paulus, clutched his arm with a woman's grasp, and said in an affrighted voice,

"My brother, let us go."

Paulus, in a manner naturally easy, and marked by the elegance and grace which the athletic training of Athens had given to one so well endowed physically, first, merely saying to the stranger, "I crave your pardon," lifted Agatha with one arm, and placed her in the travelling carriage. Then, while the freedman and the Thracian slave mounted to their bench, he returned to where his mother stood, signed to her to follow Agatha, and, seeing her move calmly but quickly toward the vehicle, he took the broad-rimmed hat from his head, and bowing slowly and lowly to the stranger, said,

"Powerful sir, for I observe you are a man of great authority, my sister is too ill to converse. You rightly

* To produce a gladiator in the arena was to *edit* him.

guessed this; permit us to take her to her destination."

The man whom he had thus balked, and to whom he now thus spoke, merits a word of description. He appeared to be more than fifty years old. The mask of his face and the frame of his head were large, but not fat. His complexion was vivid brick-red all over the cheeks, with a deeper flush in one spot on each side, just below the outer corners of the eyes. The eyes were bloodshot, large, rather prominent, and were closely set together. The nose was large, long, bony, somewhat aquiline. The forehead was not high, not low; it was much developed above the eyes, and it was broad. A deep and perpetual dint just over the nose reached half-way up the forehead. His hair was grizzled and close cut. His lips were full and fleshy, and the mouth was wide; the jaws were large and massive. His face was shaven of all hair. The chin was very handsome and large, and the whole head was set upon a thick, strong throat, not stunted, however, of its proper length. In person this man was far from ungainly, nor yet was he handsome. In carriage and bearing, without much majesty, he had nevertheless something steadfast, weighty, unshrinking, and commanding. His outer garment, not a toga, was all one color and material; it was a long, thick-wadded silk mantle, of that purple dye which is nearly black—the hue, indeed, of clotted gore under a strong light. He wore gloves, and instead of the usual short sword of the Romans, had a long steel stylus* for writing on wax thrust into a black leathern belt. This instrument

* Pliny, *Epis.* iii. 21.

seemed to show that he lived much in Rome, where it was not the custom, when otherwise in civilian dress, to go armed.

As the reader will have guessed, this man was to be the next emperor of the Roman world.

"Permit you to take her to her destination?" he repeated slowly. "My Greek physician, I tell you, shall cure her. I will give directions about your destination." A slight pause; then, "Are you a Roman citizen?"

"I am a Roman knight as well as citizen," answered Paulus proudly; "and my family is not only equestrian, but patrician."

"What is your name?"

"Paulus Æmilius Lepidus."

The man in the black or gore-colored purple glanced at Sejanus, who, still unconcerned, stood with his splendid helmet in the left hand, while he smoothed his mustache with the right; otherwise perfectly still, his handsome face, cruel mouth, and intelligent eyes all alive with the keenest attention.

"And the destination to which you allude is—?" pursued the man in black purple.

"Formiæ," said Paulus.

"What relation or kinship exists between you and Marcus Æmilius Lepidus, formerly the triumvir, who still enjoys the life which he owes to the clemency of Augustus?"

Paulus hesitated. When he had given his name, the younger of the two ladies had raised herself suddenly in the litter of ivory and gold, and fastened upon him a searching gaze, which she had not since removed. The other lady had also at that instant looked at him fixedly.

We have already stated that, when Sejanus approached the group, he had not deigned in any very cordial manner to salute or notice the second of the two gentlemen who had accompanied the litters on foot. This gentleman was very sallow, had hollow eyes, and a habit of gnawing his under lip between his teeth. He had unbuckled his sword, and had given it, calling out, "*Lygdus, carry this,*" to a man with an exceedingly sinister and repulsive countenance. The man in question had now taken a step or two forward, and was standing on the left of Paulus, fronting the Cæsar, his shoulders stooping, his neck bent forward, his eyes without any motion of the head rolling incessantly from person to person, and face to face, but at once falling before and avoiding any glance which happened to meet his. He looked askant and furtively at every object with an eager, unhappy, and malign expression. Paulus did not need to turn his head to feel that this man was now intently peering at him. Behind the two courtly palanquins, and beyond the shade of the trees, was a third litter still more costly, being covered in parts with plate gold. Here sat a woman with a face as white as alabaster, and large, prominent black eyes, watching the scene, and apparently trying to catch every word that was said.

Paulus, as we have observed, hesitated. The training of youth in the days of classic antiquity soon obliterated the inferiority of unreasoning, nervous shyness. But the strange catechism which Paulus was now undergoing, with all this gaze upon him from so many eyes, began to be a nuisance, and to tell upon a spirit singularly high

"Have you heard my question?" inquired Tiberius.

"I have heard it," replied Paulus; "and have heard and answered several others, without knowing who he is that asks them. However, the former triumvir, now living at Circæi, about forty thousand paces from here, is my father's brother." (Circæi, as the reader knows, is now called Monte Circello, a promontory just opposite Gaeta.)

When Paulus had given his last answer, the ladies glanced at each other, and the younger looked long and hard at Tiberius. Getting some momentary signal from him, she threw herself back in her palanquin and smiled meaningly at the stooping, sinister-faced man, who had stationed himself in the manner already mentioned near Paulus's left hand.

"Your father," rejoined Tiberius, after a pause, "was a very distinguished soldier, and, as I always heard, when a boy, he contributed eminently to the victory of Philippi. But I knew not that he had children; and, moreover, was he not slain, pray, at Philippi, toward the end of the battle, which he certainly helped to gain?"

"I hope," said Paulus, somewhat softened by the praise of his father, "I hope that Augustus supposed him to have died of his wounds, and that it was only under this delusion he gave our estates—which were situated somewhere in this very province of Campania, with a noble mansion like the castellum upon the river yonder—to that brave and able soldier Agrippa Vespasianus."

At this name a deep red flush overspread the brow of Tiberius, and Paulus innocently proceeded.

"Certainly, the noble Agrippa, who was to have been Cæsar, had he lived, never would have accepted so un-

fair a bounty had he known that my father really survived his wounds, but that—despairing of the generosity, or rather despairing of the equity of Augustus—he was living a melancholy, exheredated exile, near that very battlefield of Philippi, in Thrace, where he had fought so well and had been left for dead.”

“You dare to term the act of Augustus,” slowly said the man in the gore-colored purple cloak, “*so unfair a bounty*, and Augustus himself *ungenerous, or rather unjust?* ”

At this terrible rejoinder from such a man, the down-looking person whom we have mentioned passed his right hand stealthily to the hilt of the sword, which he was carrying for his master, and half drew it. Paulus, who for some time had had this person standing at his left, could observe the action without turning his head. He was perfectly aware, moreover, that, should the other draw his weapon upon him, the very act of drawing it would itself become a blow, on account of their respective places, whereas to escape it required more distance between them, and to parry it in a regular way would demand quite a different position, besides the needful moment or two for disengaging his own rather long blade. Yet the youth stood completely still; he never even turned his head. However, he just shifted the wide-rimmed hat from his left to his right hand (the hand for the sword) and thereby seemed to be only more encumbered, unprepared, and defenceless than before. His left hand, with the back inward, fell also meantime in an easy and natural way upon the emerald haft of the outlandish-looking three-edged rapier, which, as he played with it, became loose in the scabbard, and came and went some fraction of an inch.

"I never termed him so," said Paulus. "I said not this of Augustus. I am at this moment on my way to Augustus himself, who is, I am told, to be at Formiæ with his court for a week or two. I must, therefore, again ask your leave, mighty office-bearer, to continue my journey. I know not so much as who you are."

"I am Tiberius Cæsar," said the other, bending upon him those closely-set, prominent bloodshot eyes with no very assuring expression. "I am Tiberius Cæsar, and you will be pleased to wait one moment before you continue the journey in question. The accusation against your father was this: that, after Philippi, he labored for the interests first of Sextus, the son of Pompey, and afterward of Mark Antony, in their respective impious and parricidal struggles; and the answer to this charge (a charge to which witnesses neither were nor are wanting) has always been, that it was simply impossible, seeing that Paulus Lepidus, your father, perished at Philippi before the alleged treasons had occurred. Wherefore, as your father had done good service, especially in the great battle where he was thus supposed to have fallen, not only was his innocence declared certain, but, for his memory's sake, Marcus Lepidus, the triumvir, your uncle, was forgiven. Yet now we learn from you, the son of the accused, that the only defence ever made for him is positively false; that your father, were he still living, would probably merit to be put to death; and that your uncle, at the same time, is stripped of the one protecting circumstance which has preserved his head. I must order your arrest, and that of all your party, in order that these things may be at least fully investigated."

As this was said, the lady in the litter of ivory and gold contemplated Paulus with that bewitching smile which she was accustomed to bestow upon dying gladiators in the hippodrome ; while the other lady gazed at him with a compassionate, forecasting and muse-like look.

"I mean no disrespect whatever to so great a man as you, sir ; but I will," said Paulus, "appeal from Tiberius Cæsar to Cæsar Augustus ; to whom, I again remind you, I am on my way."

No sooner had he uttered the words, "I appeal from Tiberius," than, before he could finish the sentence, the malign-faced man on his left with great suddenness drew the sword he was carrying for Cneius Piso, and, availing himself of the first natural sweep of the weapon as it left the scabbard, sought to bring the edge of it backward across the face of Paulus, exclaiming, while he did so, "Speak you thus to Cæsar ?"

Had this man, who was the future assassin of Drusus, and slave to Cneius Piso, who was the future assassin of Germanicus, succeeded in delivering that well-meant stroke, the sentence which our hero was addressing to Tiberius could never have been said out ; but said out, as we see, it was, and said, too, with due propriety of emphasis, although with a singular accompanying delivery. In fact, though not deigning to look round toward this man, Paulus had been vividly aware of his movements, and, swift as was the attack, the defence was truly electrical. Paulus's rapier, the hilt of which, as we have remarked, had been for some time in his left hand, leapt from its sheath, and being first held almost perpendicularly for one moment, the point down and the hilt a

little higher than his forehead, met the murderous blow at right angles ; after which the delicate long blade flashed upward, with graceful ease but irresistible violence, bearing the assassin's weapon backward upon a small semicircle, and remaining inside of it, or, in other words, nearer to Lygdus's body than Piso's sword, which Lygdus carried. It looked like a mere continuation of this dazzling parry, but was, in truth, a vigorous deviation from it, which none but a very pliant and powerful wrist could have executed, when the emerald pommel fell like a hammer upon the forehead of Lygdus the slave, whom that disdainful blow stretched at his length upon the ground, motionless, and to all appearance dead. As Piso was standing close, the steel guard of the hilt, in passing, tore open his brow and cheek.

The whole occurrence occupied only five or seven seconds, and meanwhile the youth finished his sentence with the words already recorded, "From Tiberius Cæsar to Cæsar Augustus, to whom, I again remind you, I am on my way."

An exclamation of astonishment, and perhaps some other feeling, escaped from Tiberius. Sejanus smiled ; the woman with the pale face and black eyes, who sat in the unadorned plate-of-gold palanquin, screamed ; and the other ladies laughed loudly. Among the Prætorian Guards, who from the road were watching with attention the group where they saw their general and the Cæsar, a long, low murmur of approbation ran. At this, Tiberius turned and looked steadily and musingly toward them. Paulus, instantly sheathing his weapon, said :

"I ask Cæsar's pardon, but there was no time to obtain his permission for what I have just done. My head

must have been in two pieces had I waited but one moment."

"Just half a moment for each piece," said Tiberius; "but your left hand seems well able to keep your head. Are you left-handed?"

"No, great Cæsar," said Paulus; "I am what my Greek teacher of fence used to call two-handed, *dima-chærus*; he tried to make all his pupils so, but my right remains far better than my left."


"Then I should like to see your right thoroughly exercised," said Tiberius.

Paulus heard a sweet voice here say, "As a favor to me, do not order the arrest of this brave youth;" and, turning, he beheld the beautiful creature in the litter of ivory and gold plead for him with Tiberius. The large blue eyes, darkening as she supplicated, smote the youth, and he could hardly take away his gaze.

"Young man, go forward with your mother and sister to Formiæ, under the charge of Velleius Paterculus, the military tribune whom you see yonder upon the road. Remain in Formiæ till I give you leave to quit it. Report your place of residence to the tribune. Go!"

The last word was pronounced harshly. Tiberius made a signal with his hand to Paterculus. Then passing his arm through that of Sejanus, and speaking to him in a low tone, he led the general aside into the fields to a little distance; while—with the exception of two mounted troopers (each leading a horse), who remained behind, but considerably out of hearing—the Prætorian Guards, the three litters, and the travelling *biga* began to move toward Formiæ, leaving the road to silence and the evening landscape to peace.

CHAPTER III.

IBERIUS, when all had disappeared along the road, suddenly stopped in his walk.

His companion, toward whom he had turned, did the same, and looked at him with an air of expectation.

“I leave all details to you,” said the Cæsar; “but what has to be done is this—that youth, who calls himself Paulus Æmilius Lepidus, must be produced as a gladiator either in the Circus Maximus or the Statilian Amphitheatre,* as the number of victims may dictate. Men of noble birth have been seen ere now upon the sand. We will then make him show against the best swordsmen in the world—against Gauls, Britons, and Cappadocians—what that Greek fence is worth of which he seems a master. The girl, his sister, must be carried off, either beforehand or afterward, as your skill may dictate, and softly and safely lodged at Rome in that two-storied brick house of Cneius Piso and his precious wife, Plancina, which is not known to be mine (I believe and hope, and am given to understand, that it is not known to be theirs either).”

Tiberius paused, and Sejanus, with an intent look, slightly inclined his head. He was a keen man, a subtle man, but not a very profound man. He observed:

“I have heard something of this Greek widow and of her son and daughter. They have (it seems to me as if

* Suetonius, Aug. 39. The forum, where gladiators had often bled, was becoming less and less used for that purpose.

I had heard this) friends near the person of Augustus, or, at least, in the court. I can easily cause the girl to be so carried off that no rumor about the place of her residence will evermore sound among men. But the very mystery of it will sound, and that loudly ; and her mother and brother will never cease to pierce the ears of Augustus with their cries. But, before I say a word more, I wish to know two things—first, whether this youth Paulus is to be included in one of those great shows of gladiators which are rendering you, my Cæsar, so beloved by the Roman people ? ”

“ Am I beloved, think you ? ” asked Tiberius.

“ The master-passion of the people is for the shows, and, above all, the fights of the amphitheatre,” answered Sejanus. “ Whoever has, for a hundred years and more, obtained the mastery of the world, has thus won the Romans ; each succeeding dictator of the globe, from Caius Marius, and Sylla, and Pompey, and the invincible Caius Julius and Mark Antony, to our present happy Emperor Augustus, has surpassed his predecessors in the magnificence of these entertainments given to people, populace, common legionaries, and Prætorians ; and in exact proportion also, it is remarkable, has each surpassed his forerunners in permanent power, until that power has at last become nearly absolute, nearly unlimited.”

“ You say true,” replied Tiberius ; “ and I excel all former examples in the extent, splendor, and novelty of my shows. Augustus has abandoned that department ; but even when he was courting the Romans he never *edited* like me. People would now smile at the old-fashioned meanness of the spectacles which he formerly

made acceptable to them. He is breaking very fast in health, too, I fear, my Sejanus."

"He is, I fear, drawing toward his end," replied the commander of the Prætorians.

"As to your question concerning this youth," resumed Tiberius, "my object is partly to add a novel and curious feature to the fight—this strange sword-play. Yet, why should he not afterward be included in some great slaughter-match, three or four hundred a side, care being taken that he should be finished? We might first pit him fairly against six or a dozen single antagonists in succession. If he conquer them all, it will be unprecedentedly amusing; the people will be in ecstasies, and then the victor can be made to disappear in the general conflict. I shall thus have the undisturbed management of his sister's education."*

Grave as a statue, Sejanus replied :

"He is a proud youth, an equestrian, a patrician, son of an eminent warrior, nephew of one who once shared in the government of the whole globe. Well, not being a slave, if he found himself in the arena by virtue of having been violently seized and trepanned, I firmly believe that, either before or after fighting, he would make a speech, appealing to the justice of the emperor and the sympathy of the people, not to say anything about the soldiers. The plan you propose, my Cæsar, seems like furnishing him with an immense audience and a gigantic tribunal before which to tell that pathetic story about his father and the battle of Philippi, and those family estates which are now in the possession of the

* It is well known that Trajan exhibited shows in which ten thousand gladiators fought, but this monstrous development of cruelty came long after our date.

two beautiful ladies whose litters have just preceded us on the road to Formiæ."

Tiberius smiled, as, with his head bent down, he looked at the speaker, and thus he continued stooping, looking, and smiling for a moment or two, after which he said :

"The Tuscans are subtle, and you are the subtlest of Tuscans ; what is best ? "

Sejanus said : " Let the girl first be carried away ; let the mother and brother break their hearts for her ; then let the Lanista Thellus, who is not known to be one of your men, but is supposed to hire out his gladiators on his own account, invite the youth to join his *familia*,* or company, and when Paulus refuses, as he will refuse, let Thellus say that he knows money would not bribe Paulus, but that he has seen Paulus's sister ; that he can guide him to her, if Paulus consents to fight in the next great forthcoming shows. And, in short, in order to make all this more specious, let Thellus have formed the acquaintance of the half-Greek family, mother, sister, brother, before the girl is abducted, in order that Paulus may think he speaks the truth when afterward saying that he has seen the sister and knows her, and can guide Paulus to where she is detained. If this plan be adopted, Paulus will fight in the arena of his own accord, and will make no speeches, no disturbance, but will disappear for ever in a decorous and legitimate manner."

"You are a man of immense merit, my Sejanus," replied the personage in gore-colored purple, "and I will some day reward you more than I can do while merely the Cæsar of an Augustus—whom may the gods protect !

* A school of gladiators. Suet. Jul. 26 ; Aug. 42 ; Tacit. Hist. ii. 88.

The mother, perhaps, we can let alone, or she could be put on board a corsair as an offering to some god, to procure me good fortune in other things. We shall see. Meanwhile, execute all the rest with as little delay as the order and priority of the several matters, one before the other, will allow, and report to me punctually at every step."

Beckoning to one of the troopers, who approached with the spare horse, Tiberius now mounted. The soldier immediately withdrew again, and Tiberius said to the Prætorian commander, "Be upon your guard with Paterculus; he is doubtless devoted to me, but is a squeamish man; clever, indeed, too. Still, there are clever fools, my Sejanus."

Then waving his hand, he rode slowly away, but came to a halt at a distance of twenty paces, and turned his horse's head round. Sejanus strode quickly toward his master.

"You know, of course, that the Germans, encouraged by the slaughter of Varus and his legions, are swarming over the Julian Alps into the northeast of Italy from Illyricum.* How many legions are there available to meet them?"

"We have within reach, at this moment, twelve," said Sejanus, "besides my Prætorians."

"Half the present forces of the whole empire," replied the other. "Germanicus is to drive back the barbarians. He will become more popular than ever with the troops generally. But the Prætorians do not care for him, I suppose?"

* This German expedition took the same direction as that of the Austrian armies which endeavored to dislodge Bonaparte from the siege of Mantua, and came pouring down both sides of Lake Garda.

"Even the Prætorians revere him," answered Sejanus.

"Why, how so? They have so little to do with him."

"They know a soldier——" began Sejanus.

"And am not I a soldier?" interrupted his master.

"They love you, too, my Cæsar, and dearly."


"Peace! Tell me exactly. What think the Prætorians of Germanicus?"

"They foolishly think that, since the day when Caius Julius was murdered, no such soldier——"

"Enough! Foolishly, say you! Remember my instructions. *Vale!*" And Tiberius galloped north, his face ablaze with a brick-red flush deeper than ordinary.



CHAPTER IV.

EJANUS, when left alone, motioned to the two troopers. He who had brought Tiberius his horse rode furiously after the Cæsar; the other attended the general, who slowly mounted his own steed, and, pursuing the same direction, began to trot leisurely toward Formiæ. The sun had gone down; the short twilight had passed away; clouds had gathered, and the moon, not having yet risen, the night was very black. In a few minutes Sejanus slackened his horse's pace from a trot to a walk, and the orderly, as his military attendant would in modern times be called, nearly rode against him in the dark. The man made some natural excuse, and fell back again about thirty paces.

Sejanus hardly noticed him.

"At present," he muttered, when again alone, "Tiberius, though a Cæsar, needs me; Germanicus is Cæsar too, and may become emperor. If Germanicus wished it, right or wrong—if *per fas et nefas*—he would win. He has much of the genius of Caius Julius and his defect of overtrustfulness; but none of his many vices. I doubt if he will ever be emperor; he is too Athenian, and also too honorable, too disinterested. Somehow I feel, too, as if he were going to be assassinated; he believes readily in men. Tiberius has smaller abilities, worse qualities, and better chances. He will rule the world, and Ælius Sejanus will rule him."

As Sejanus said these things to himself in an indistinct murmur, of which none could have heard the pre-

cise words, a voice at his elbow astonished him. Said the voice,

"How far is it, illustrious general, to Formiæ?"

The Prætorian chief turned with a start, and saw that the speaker was a mounted traveller, attended by two servants, also on horseback; but there was so little light that he could not distinguish the stranger's features, nor more of his dress and appointments than that they were not, as it seemed, Italian.

"About five thousand paces," he answered. "However, there is no inn at Formiæ. Some eight hundred paces from here is a good wayside tavern. But you call me general, for I wear the dress. You do not, however, know me."

"Not know the distinguished chief of the Prætorians? Not know the happy and unhappy, the fortunate and unfortunate Sejanus?"

"Happy and unhappy," reëchoed the latter, "fortunate and unfortunate! What means this jargon? You could use that language of every mortal. What you say you unsay."

While thus replying, he endeavored to discern the dim features of his new companion.

"Think you so?" said the man. "Then, pray, would it be the same if I were to say, for example, unhappy and happy, unfortunate and fortunate?"

"Yes."

"Alas! no."

"What!" said Sejanus. "The happiness is present, the good fortune is present, but the misfortune and unhappiness are to come. Is this your meaning?"

"As I always say what I mean," rejoined the other, "so I never explain what I say."

"Then at least," observed Sejanus, with great haughtiness of tone and manner, "you will be good enough to say who you are. As the *Prætor Peregrinus*,* especially charged to look after foreigners, I demand your name. Remember, friend, that six lictors, as well as twenty thousand soldiers, obey Sejanus."

"I am the god Hermes," replied the other, riding suddenly ahead, followed by both his attendants.

The movement was so unexpected that the figure of the stranger had become almost indistinguishable in the obscurity, before Sejanus urged his fleet Numidian steed forward at a bound in pursuit.

"Take care," said a voice in his front, "that your horse do not throw you, impious man!"

At the same time, the Prætorian leader heard something roll upon the paved road, and immediately a vivid flash blazed under his horse's eyes, and a sharp report followed. Nearly thrown, indeed, he was, as the voice had warned him. When he had recovered his balance and quieted the startled beast he was riding, he halted to listen; but the only sound he could now hear was that of the mounted trooper trotting after him along the Appian Way. He waited for this man to come up, and inquired what he had observed in the three strangers who had previously passed him on the road.

"No stranger," said the man, "had passed him; he had seen no one."

Then Sejanus remembered what he had not at the moment adverted to, that neither when first accosted by


* Cic. Fam. xiii 59; Dion. iii 22.

the stranger, nor afterward, while this person with his two attendants rode by his side, nor finally when they all galloped forward and were lost in the darkness, had any clatter of hoofs been audible.

He resumed his journey in silent thought, and soon arrived, without further adventure, at the large and famous post-house, standing in those days four or five miles south of Formiæ.



CHAPTER V.

HE post-house, or *mansio** to which allusion has been made, situated about four or five miles south of Formiæ, on the Appian road, was a large, rambling, two-storied brick house, capable of accommodating a vast number of travellers. It was not, therefore, merely one of the many relay-houses where the imperial couriers, as well as all who could produce a special warrant for the purpose, from a consul, or a prætor, or even a quæstor, were allowed to obtain a change of horses; still less was it one of the low canal-town taverns, whose keepers Horace abused; but it was a regular country inn, where man and beast found shelter for the small charge of one *as*,† and good cheer at proportionably moderate cost. It was well supplied from its own farmyards, olive-groves, orchards, vineyards, pastures, and tilled fields, with vegetables, beef, mutton, poultry, geese, ducks, attagens, and other meats; eggs, wine, butter, cheese, milk, honey, bread and fruit; a delicious plate of fish occasionally, an equally delicious array of quail, produced upon table in a state aromatic and frothy with their own fat juices.

This excellent and celebrated house of entertainment for belated or wayworn travellers, as well as for all who desired a change from the monotony of their usual life, was kept by a remarkably worthy old couple, formerly

* The malignant inn-keepers mentioned by Horace (Sat. lib. i., Sat. 5) kept a low class of houses in comparison with this notable hostelry.

† Not quite one cent.

slaves, a freedman and freedwoman of the illustrious Æmilian family. The reader will have noticed that our hero has been called Paulus Æmilius Lepidus; that his father had borne the same style; and likewise that his father's brother, the former sovereign magistrate or triumvir in the second and great triumphate, was named Marcus Æmilius Lepidus. In all these names, that of Æmilius occurs; and Æmilius was the noblest of the patronymics which once this great family boasted. Now, theirs had been the house in which Crispus and Crispina, the good innkeeper and his wife, at present free and prosperous, had been boy and girl slaves. The wife, indeed, had been nurse to a son of Marcus Lepidus, the triumvir.

That son, some years before the date of our narrative, had been engaged in a conspiracy against Augustus; and the conspiracy having been discovered by Mæcenas, the youth had been put to death. Marcus Æmilius Lepidus, the father, was exculpated from all knowledge of this attempt on the part of his son, but had ever since lived in profound retirement at a lonely seashore castle some twenty or thirty miles from Crispus's inn, near Monte Circello; a silent, brooding, timid man, no longer very wealthy, entirely without weight in the society which he had abandoned, and without any visible influence in the political world, from which he had fled in some terror and immense disgust.

As Sejanus rode slowly up to the inn-door, a centurion came out of the porch with the air of one who had been waiting for him. Saluting the general, this officer said that he had been left behind by Velleius Paterculus to say that the sister of the youth whom Tiberius had

placed under the charge of Paterculus had fainted on the road; that being unable to proceed, she and her mother had taken a lodging in the inn; that the youth had at once begged Paterculus to allow him to remain instead of proceeding to Formiæ, in order that he might attend to his poor sister, for whose life he was alarmed, giving his promise that he would faithfully report himself, and not attempt to escape; that Paterculus considered himself justified, under the circumstances, in acceding to so natural a request; consequently, that the young man was now in the inn, along with his mother and sister; and that he, the centurion, had been ordered to await Sejanus's arrival and inform him of what had occurred, so that he might either confirm his subordinate's decision, or repair the mistake, if it was one, and cause the youth to go forward at once to Formiæ according to the letter of Tiberius's original command.

"It is well," said Sejanus, after a moment's reflection. "This is not the sort of lad who will break his word. Carthaginians, and rubbish like them, knew long ago how to believe a Roman knight and patrician, and this lad seems to be of the Regulus breed. Does the Cæsar himself, however, know of this?"

"I had no orders to tell him," answered the centurion; "and if I had had, it would have been difficult; he passed at full gallop a quarter of an hour ago, his head down, not so much as looking aside."

Sejanus then put the following question with a sneer:

"Has a god, or a stranger with two attendants on horseback, passed this way?"

"No god, unless he be a god, and he had no attendants," said the astonished centurion.

“ You have not seen three figures on horseback, nor a flash of bluish light ? ”


“ I certainly thought I saw three figures on horseback, but I could not be sure. It was on the farther side of the way, general, which is broad,” continued the man apologetically, “ and there was no sound of hoofs ; my impression, too, was gone in a moment. As to a flash of bluish light, there are several flashes of red and white light inside the inn kitchen, and they make the road outside all the darker ; but there has been no flash in the road.”

“ Good ! now follow me.”

And Sejanus rode on in the direction of *Formiæ*, the centurion and the soldier behind him.



CHAPTER VI.

HE inn, it is well ascertained, never became a common institution in classic antiquity. It was utterly unknown in anything like its modern shape among the Greeks ; one cause being that the literary Greeks gave less care to their roads and communications than the administrating, fighting, conquering, and colonizing Romans always did. Even among the Romans the army trusted to its city-like encampments from stage to stage. Centuries passed away, during which the private traveller found few indeed, and far between, any better public resting-houses along the magnificent and stupendous highways, whose remains we still behold indestructible, from England to Asia Minor, than the half-day relay-posts, or *mutationes*. At these the wayfarer, by producing* his *diploma* from the proper authorities, obtained a change of horses.

Travelling, in short, was a thousand-fold less practiced than it is among us ; and those who did travel, or who deemed it likely they ever should, trusted to that hospitality which necessity had made universal, and the poetry of daily life had raised by repute into one of the greatest virtues. Years before any member of your family, supposing you to belong to the age through which the events of this narrative are carrying and to carry us, years before any of your circle quitted your roof, you knew to what house, to what smoky hearth in each foreign land, to what threshold in Spain, Gaul,

* Pliny, Ep. x. 14, 121.

Syria, Egypt, Greece, the wanderer would eventually resort. A certain family in each of these and other lands was your *hospes*, and you were theirs; and very often you carried round your neck, attached to a gold or silver chain, a bit of elder or oak notched and marked by the natural breakage, the corresponding half of which hung day and night round the neck of some friend living thousands of miles away, beyond rivers, mountains, wild forests, and raging seas. These tokens were the cheap lodging-money of friendship. Very often they were interchanged and put on in boyhood, and not presented till advanced age. He who had thrown the sacred symbol round the curly head of his playmate on the banks of the Tiber, saw an old man with scanty white hair approach him, half a century afterward, at Alexandria, or Numantia, or Athens, and offer him a little bit of wood, the fractures of which were found to fit into those of a similar piece worn upon his own bosom. Or the son brought the father's token; or a son received what a father had given. And the stranger was forthwith joyfully made welcome, and took rank among dear friends. Forthwith the bath and the supper introduced him to his remote home amid foreign faces. To be once unfaithful to these pledges, was to become irreparably infamous. The caitiff who thus sundered the ties of traditionary and necessity-caused and world-wide kindness, became an object of scorn and reprobation to all. It was enough to mention of him,* *tesseram confregit hospitem* ("that man has broken his token-word of hospitality"); with that all was said. Traces of this touching custom appear to survive

* Cic. Qu. Fr. ii. 14; Plautus, Pcen. v. 1, 22, 2, 92, Cist. 2, 1, 27.

in some of the ceremonials of rustic love, amid many a population ignorant that the ancient Romans ever reigned over Europe.

But if inns, in year eleven, were not what they have been in mediæval and modern Europe, nevertheless a few existed even then; and a more notable establishment of this kind never flourished in any part of the Roman empire than that to which our story has now brought us. It was the exception to manners then prevalent, and the presage of manners to come long afterward. It used to be commonly called the *Post-House of the Hundredth Milestone*, or, more briefly, *Crispus's Inn*.

The public-room of this place of entertainment was not unlike the coffee-room of a good modern inn, except that it was necessarily far more full of incident and interest, because the ancients were beyond comparison more addicted to living in public than any modern nation has ever been.

An Englishman who makes a similar remark of the French, in comparison with his own countrymen, has only to remember that the modern French as much excel the ancient Romans in fondness for retirement and privacy and domestic life as the English believe themselves to excel the French in the same particular.

An inn did not trouble itself much with the *triclinium*, a chamber seldom used by its frequenters. Even the manners of the *triclinium* were out of vogue here.

In Crispus's public-room, for instance, there was one and only one table arranged with couches around it, upon which some three or four customers, while eating and drinking, could recline according to the fashion

adopted in the private houses of the rich and noble. All the other tables stood around the walls of the apartment, with benches and settees on each side, offering seats for the guests. The inner seats at these tables were generally preferred, for two reasons: the occupants saw all that passed in the room, and, besides, had the wall, against which they could lean back.

When Velleius Paterculus, having left Tiberius and Sejanus in the meadows near the Liris, took charge of the Prætorian squadrons and of Paulus, he directed a Batavian trooper to dismount and give his horse to the prisoner. Paulus willingly sprung upon the big Flemish beast and rode by the side of the obliging officer who had given him that conveyance. Thus they proceeded at an easy amble until they reached the post-house, to the porch of which the noise of four thousand hoofs, suddenly approaching along the paved road, had brought a group of curious gazers. Among these was the landlord, Crispus himself.

A halt, as the reader must have inferred from a former incident, was occasioned at the door by the intimation conveyed to Paterculus that Paulus's sister had fainted, that she and her mother intended to seek a lodging at the inn, and that the mother and brother of the invalid would both feel grateful to the commanding officer if he could permit Paulus, upon pledging his word not to make any attempt to escape, to remain there with them.

"As to the ladies," said the urbane literary soldier, "I have neither the wish nor any orders to interfere with their movements. But you, young sir, what say you? Will you give me your word to regard yourself

as being in my custody till I expressly release you? Will you promise not to *abire, evadere, excedere, or erumpere*, as our friend Tully said?"

"Tully! Who is that?" asked our hero.

"What, you a half-Greek and not know who Tully was! Is this the manner in which Greek youths, or at least youths in Greece, are educated! Is it thus they are taught in Greece, to which we go ourselves for education! In that Greece which has forbidden gladiatorial shows, and diminished the training of the body to have more time for that of the intellect!"

Paulus blushed, seeing he must have betrayed some gross degree of rusticity, and answered:

"I know I am ignorant: I have been so much occupied in athletic sports. But I will give you the promise you ask, and keep it most truly and faithfully."

"I will trust you, then. Go a little, my friend, into the athletic sports of the mind, which are precisely those Greece most cultivates. You are of a great family now fallen down. The muscles of the arm, the strength of the body, a blow from a cestus, never yet raised that kind of burden off the ground. You fence astonishingly well—I noted your parry just now; but the fence of the mind is everything, believe me. By the way, I see the excellent Piso, whom you hammered down after the parry, as one puts a full stop to a pretty sentence, is being carried into this same post-house."

"By your leave, illustrious sir," interposed the inn-keeper, rather nervously, "it is scarcely the custom, is it, to drop guests at Crispus's door, without first asking Crispus has he room for them? The expected visit of the divine Augustus to the neighboring palace of the

most excellent and valiant knight Mamurra, in Formiæ, has choked and strangled this poor house. There is no place where the multitude of guests can lodge in the town, so they come hither, as to a spot at a convenient distance. Troops of players, troops of gladiators, troops of fortune-tellers, troops of geese, pigs, beeves, attagens, alive and dead, night and day, for the last week, with mighty personages from a distance, make the road noisy, I assure you, even after my house is full. I believe they would wish me to put up the very oxen intended for sacrifice."

"Have you no chambers whatever vacant?" asked Velleius.

"I did not say that, most excellent sir; vacant is one thing, disengaged is another. I have received an express letter from Brundusium, to say that a certain queen out of the East, with her son and her train, are coming to pay their homage to the emperor; and here we have already the servants of that Jew king, as they say, one King Alexander, who wants his cause to be heard and his title settled by Augustus himself, and I am obliged to listen to loud outcries that he, too, must have apartments."

At this moment the travelling carriage carrying poor Agatha and her mother had been drawn nearly opposite to the porch, but a little in rear of the tribune, so as not to interrupt his conversation with the innkeeper. Paterculus threw a quick glance at the beautiful pallid face of the girl, and the anxious and frightened look of her mother.

"By what you tell me, worthy Crispus," he replied, "you are so far from having your justly celebrated house

full, that you are keeping two sets of apartments still vacant, in expectation, first, of some queen from the East, with her son and train, and secondly, of this Jewish king, one Alexander. Worthy libertinus,* the fair damsel whom you see so pale, is very sick, and has just swooned away from sheer fatigue. Will you turn such a daughter in such health, with her noble mother, from your door? A queen can take care of herself, it seems to me. But what will become of these excellent Roman ladies, your own countrywomen, if you now bid them be-gone from your threshold? You have assured me that they can obtain no shelter at all in Formiæ. Look at the child! She seems likely to faint again. Are you to let this daughter of a Roman knight die in the fields, in order that you may have room for a barbarian queen? You have a daughter of your own, I am told."

"Die!" groaned the innkeeper: "all this did not come into my mind, most illustrious tribune and quæstor. Come, little lady, let me help you down. This lady and her daughter, sir, shall have the queen's own apartments—may all the gods destroy me otherwise! Here, Crispina."

Velleius Paterculus smiled, and having whispered some order to a centurion, who remained behind in watch for Sejanus, the tribune waved his hand, crying out *vale* to whom it might concern, and rode forward with the Prætorians at a much smarter pace than they had come.

* *Libertus*, freedman of such or such a family; *libertinus*, freedman in general, or son of one.

CHAPTER VII.

MEANWHILE the innkeeper's wife, Crispina, had appeared, and had led Aglais and her daughter through the group in the porch into the house, and passing by a little *zothecula*,* behind the curtain of which they heard the sound of flutes,† as the carvers carved, and many voices, loud and low, denoting the apartment called *diaeta* or public room of the inn, they soon arrived at the *compluvium*, an open space or small court, in the middle of which was a cistern, and in the middle of the cistern a splashing fountain. The cistern was railed by a circular wooden balustrade, against which some creeping plants grew. This cistern was supplied from the sky; for the whole space or court in which it lay was open and unroofed. Between the circular wooden balustrade and the walls of the house was, on every side, a large quadrangular walk, lightly graveled, and flashing back, under the lantern which Crispina carried, an almost metallic glint and sparkle. Of course this walk presented its quadrangular form on the outer edge, next the house only; the inside, next the cistern, was rounded away. This quadrangular walk was at one spot diminished in width by a staircase in the open air (but under an awning), which led up to the second story of the large brick building. Around the whole *compluvium*, or court, the four inner faces of the inn, which had

* *Zothecula*, a small apartment, one side of which was formed by a curtain. Pliny, Epis. ii. 17; v. 6. Suetonius, Claud. 10.

† *Flutes*, etc. Juvenal, v. 121; xi. 137.

four covered lights in sconces against the walls, were marked at irregular intervals by windows, some of which were mere holes, with trapdoors (in every case open at present); others, lattice-work, like what, many centuries later, obtained the name of arabesque-work, having a curtain inside that could be drawn or undrawn. Others again with perforated slides; others stretched with linen which oil had rendered diaphanous; others fitted with thin scraped horn; one only, a tolerably large window, with some kind of mineral panes more translucent than transparent.

At the back, or west of the inn, an irregular oblong wing extended, which, of course, could not open upon this court, but had its own means of light and ventilation north and south respectively.

Crispus had followed the group of women, and our friend Paulus had followed Crispus. In the *compluvium* the innkeeper took the lantern from his wife, and begged Aglais and Agatha to follow him up the awning-covered staircase. As he began to ascend, it happened that Crispina, looking around, noticed Paulus, who had taken off his broad-rimmed hat, under one of the sconces. No sooner had her eyes rested on him than she started violently and grasped the balustrade as if she would have fallen but for that support.

"Who are you?" said the woman.

"The brother of that young lady who is ill, and the son of the other lady."

"And you, too, must want lodgings?"

"Certainly."

The woman seized his arm with a vehement grip and gazed at him.

"Are you ill?" said Paulus, "or—or—out of your mind? Why do you clutch my arm and look at me in that fashion?"

"Too young," said she, rather to herself than to him; "besides, I saw the last act with these eyes. Truly this is wonderful."

Then, like one waking from a dream, she added, "Well, if you want lodgings, you shall have them. You shall have the apartments of this king or pretender—the rooms prepared for the Jew Alexander. Come with me at once." And she unfastened the lamp in the nearest sconce and led Paulus up the staircase.

Thus the wanderers, Aglais and her daughter, had the queen's room, with their Thracian slave Melana to wait upon them, while the prisoner Paulus had the king's, to which Crispina herself ordered old Philip, the freedman, to carry his luggage.

A few moments later the innkeeper, who had returned to the more public parts of the house to attend to his usual duties, met Philip laden with parcels in one of the passages, and asked him what he was doing.

"Carrying young Master Paulus's things to his room."

"You can carry," said the innkeeper, "whatever the ladies require to *their* room; but your young master has no room at all, my man, in this house. And why? For the same reason that will compel you to sleep in one of the lofts over the stables. There is no space for him in the inn. You must make him as comfortable as you can in the hay, just like yourself."

"Humanity is something," muttered Crispus; "but to make a queen one's enemy on that score, without adding a king, where no humane consideration inter-

venes at all, is enough for a poor innkeeper in a single night. These *tetrarchs* and rich barbarians can do a poor man an ugly turn. Who knows but he might complain of my house to the emperor, or to one of the consuls, or the prætor, or even the quæstor, and presto! everything is seized, and I am banished to the Tauric Chersonese, or to Tomos in Scythia, to drink mare's milk with the poet Ovid.*"

"Go on, freedman, with your luggage," here said a peremptory voice, "and take it whither you have taken the rest."

"And in the name of all the gods, wife," cried Crispus, "whither may that be?"

"Go on, freedman," she repeated; and then taking her husband aside, she spoke to him in a low tone.

"Have you remarked this youth's face?" she asked; "and have you any idea who he is?"

"I know not who any of them are," replied Crispus.

"Look at him then; for here he comes."

Crispus looked, and as he looked his eyes grew bigger; and again he looked until Paulus noticed it, and smiled.

"Do you know me?" says he.

"No, illustrious sir."

"Alas! I am not illustrious, good landlord, but hungry I am. And I believe we all are, except my poor sister, who is not very strong, and for whom, by and by, I should like to procure the advice of a physician."

"The poor young thing," said Crispina, "is only tired

* Something in this language may seem out of keeping. I would therefore remind the reader that the most learned, accomplished, studious, and highly-cultivated minds among the Romans were very frequently found in the class of slaves and freedmen.

with her journey; it is nothing. She will be well to-morrow. Supper you shall have presently in the ante-chamber of your mother's apartments; and your freed-man and female slave shall be cared for after they have waited upon you."

"All this is easy and shall be seen to forthwith," added Crispus; "but the doctor for your dear sister, where shall we find him?"

"Understand," said Paulus, "my sister is not in immediate danger, such as would justify calling in any empiric at once rather than nobody. She has been ailing for some time, and it is of no use to send for the first common stupid practitioner that may be in the way. Is there not some famous doctor procurable in Italy?"

"The most famous in Italy is a Greek physician not five thousand paces from here at this moment," said the landlord. "But he would not come to everybody; he is Tiberius Cæsar's own doctor."

"You mean Charicles," replied Paulus. "I almost think he would come; my mother is a Greek lady, and he will surely be glad to oblige his countrywoman."

"Then write you a note to him," said Crispina, "and I will send it instantly."

Paulus thanked her, said he would, and withdrew.

When he proposed to his mother to dispatch this message to Charicles, she hesitated much. Agatha was better; he found her in comparatively good spirits. It would do to send for the doctor next day. An urgent summons conveyed at night to the palace or residence of the Cæsar, where Charicles would probably of necessity be, would cause Tiberius to inquire into the matter, and would again draw his attention, and draw it still

more persistently to them. He had already intimated that he would order his physician to attend Agatha. They did not desire to establish very close relations with the man in black purple.

It is wonderful even how that very intimation from Tiberius had diminished both mother's and daughter's anxiety to consult the celebrated practitioner, to whose advice and assistance they had previously looked forward. There were parties in the court and cabals in the political world ; and among them, as it happened, was the Greek faction, at the head of which his ill-wishers alleged Germanicus to be. Græculus, or Greek coxcomb, was one of the names flung at him as a reproach by his enemies. What the Scotch, and subsequently the Irish interest may have been at various times in modern England, that the Greek interest was then in Roman society. Of all men, he who most needed to be cautious and discreet in such a case was an adventurer who, being himself a Greek, owed to his personal merit and abilities the position of emolument and credit which he enjoyed ; who was tolerated for his individual qualities as a foreigner, but who, if suspected of using professional opportunities as a political partisan, would be of no service to others, and would merely lose his own advantages.

"Let Tiberius send Charicles to us," continued Aglais, "and our countryman and friend may be of service to us, even in the suit which we have to urge at court. But were we now to show the Cæsar that we confide in Charicles, we should only injure our countryman and not benefit ourselves."

"How injure him ? "

"Thus," replied the Greek lady. "If your claim for the restitution of your father's estates be not granted for justice's sake, I must make interest in order that it may be granted for favor's sake. As a Greek I shall be likely to induce no powerful person to take our claims under his protection except Germanicus, the friend of Athenians. Now, it is a fact, which I have learned for certain, that Tiberius hates Germanicus, whom he regards as his rival; and that whoever is patronized by Germanicus, him Tiberius would gladly destroy. Behold us in a short while the clients and retainers of this same Germanicus, and let Tiberius then remember that his own physician has been, and continues to be, intimate and confidential with this brood of the Germanicus faction. Would not Charicles be damaged, perhaps endangered? But if we wait until the Cæsar himself sends us the doctor, as he said he would, we may then gain by it, and our friend not lose."

"Mother, you are indeed Greek," said Paulus, laughing; "and as Agatha is in no actual danger, be it as you say. Do you know, sister, there is nothing the matter with you but fatigue and fright? I am sure of it. You will recover rapidly now, with rest, peace, and safety."

"Mother," says Agatha, smiling, "we have forgotten, amid all this consultation about my health, to tell brother the curious discovery I have just made."

"True," said Aglais; "your sister has explored a very odd fact indeed."

"Why, brother," says Agatha, "we found you in this large sitting-room when we entered, though we had left you below-stairs, near the cistern."

"Found me?" said Paulus.

"Yes," added his mother; "found you concealed in this room by Tiberius."

"Concealed by Tiberius?"

"I will not leave you in suspense any longer," said the young girl, laughing. "Look here." And she led him to a table, behind the bench on which she had been sitting, and directed his attention to a bust, or rather a head of Tiberius, modeled or moulded in some sort of pottery.

"That" said she, "when I first sat down, stood upon yonder table opposite to us. I recognized the face of the man who had spoken to me under the chestnut-trees, just before you assisted me back to the carriage. I abhor the wicked countenance; and not choosing to let it stare at me like a dream where it was, I rose and went to remove it to the stand where you now see it, behind my bench. Well, only think! I took it, so, with my hands, one under each ear, and lifted it; when, lo! it came away, and left your own dear face looking at us, thus!"

As she spoke, she again lifted the *terra cotta* face, and beneath it a much smaller and more elegant piece of sculpture in white marble was disclosed, presenting the lineaments and image of Paulus himself. He started, and then his sister replaced the mask of Tiberius with a laugh.

"Was I not speaking true when I said that Tiberius had concealed you here?" said his mother.

"The Cæsar, very true, has me in his head, and well secured," said Paulus.

At that moment the door opened, and Crispina en-

tered to ask whether the letter for the physician was ready. They told her they had changed their minds, and would not, at least that night, send any letter, Agatha felt and looked so much better.

"Then I will at once order your supper to be brought," said Crispina; "and as you are evidently people of distinction, would you like music while the meats are carved?"

"Certainly not," said the Greek lady.

"Nor a carver either, mother," interposed Agatha; and, turning to the hostess, she begged that they might be treated as quietly and let alone as much as it was possible.

"That is indeed our desire," said the Greek lady.

"In that case," replied the hostess, "my own daughter, Benigna, shall attend to you. Nobody shall trouble you. You are in the rear or west wing of the house, far away from all the noise of our customers, who are sometimes, I confess, sufficiently uproarious. But Crispus is not afraid of them. When to-morrow's sun rises, you will be glad to find what a beautiful country extends beneath your windows, even to the waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea. You will behold, first, a garden and beehive; beyond these are orchards; beyond them, fields of husbandry and pleasant pasture-lands, with not a human figure to be seen except knots and dots of work-people, a few shepherds, and perhaps an angler amusing himself on the banks of the Liris in the distance."

"Oh!" said Agatha, "I wish soon to go to sleep, that we may set out quickly toward that beautiful country to-morrow morning."

"Would you not like a little bit of something very

nice for supper first, my precious little lady ? ” quoth the good hostess ; “ and that will make you sleep all the better, and from the moment when you close your pretty eyes in rest and comfort under poor Crispina’s roof, to the moment when you open them upon those lovely scenes, you won’t be able to count one, two, three—but just only one—and presto ! there’s to-morrow morning for you.”

Agatha declared that this was very nice ; and that supper would be nice ; and that everything was comfortable—the rooms particularly so.

“ Then a delicious little supper shall be got ready at once,” said Crispina. “ I’ll call my brisk Benigna to help me.”


Before quitting the room, however, the landlady, whose glance had rested chiefly upon Paulus during the conversation, threw up her hands a little way. She then composed herself, and, addressing Aglais, asked :

“ What names, lady, shall I put down in my book ? ”

“ I will tell you when you return,” replied Aglais ; and the landlady retired.



CHAPTER VIII.

ET us show her the marble likeness," suggested Paulus, in an eager whisper, with the air of a child devising mischief.

While they were discussing this topic, a gentle knock was heard at the door, and then a very pretty girl of about fifteen, with an open, sweet countenance, and a remarkably modest, cheerful bearing, presented herself, with a sort of tray, with various articles for supper arranged thereon.

"May I come in? I am Benigna," said the girl, courtesying.

"Come in, Benigna," said the lady.

"Come in," added Agatha, in Latin, but by no means with so good an accent as her mother's. "You seem like your name; you seem to be Benigna."

The girl looked at the beautiful child with a sweet, grateful smile, and immediately proceeded to prepare a table and three covers for supper.

"Do you know Greek?"* asked Aglais.

"No, lady," replied the daughter of the house. "My father is quite a scholar. He was one of the secretary slaves in the great house before he got his freedom, and my mother has learnt much from him; but I have been brought up to help mother in the inn, and never had time to learn high things."

*Greek, we may observe, was to the Romans of that age about as familiar as, and far more necessary than, French is to us. It was the vehicle of all philosophy, and the condition of all higher education. The fashionable Romans used Greek phrases in conversation through vanity.

Agatha clapped her hands, and exclaimed :

"Then I'll talk my bad Latin to Benigna, and she shall make it good."

The girl paused in her operations at the table, and said :

"I thought Latin came naturally to one, like the rain, and that it was Greek which had to be worked out, and made, just as wine is."

The landlady, carrying various articles, entered as her daughter uttered this valuable observation, and she joined heartily in the laugh with which it was greeted. Benigna gazed around a moment in amazement, and then resumed her work, laughing through sympathy, but very red from the forehead to the dimples round her pretty mouth.

The supper-table was soon ready.

Paulus, at whom the hostess had frequently looked wistfully, now remarked that they all felt much gratitude for the kindness they were receiving, and never could forget it. Crispina, who was going out at the moment, did not reply, but lingered with her hand upon the door ; the other hand she passed once across her eyes.

Then the Greek lady observed :

"Good hostess, these are the apartments you intended for some barbarian queen, I believe ?"

"Yes, my lady ; for Queen Berenice, daughter-in-law of King Herod the Idumæan, called Herod the Great, with her son Herod Agrippa, a wild youth, I understand, about eighteen years old, and her daughter Herodias."

"I heard the tribune quæstor, who commands the Prætorians, plead for us with your husband," continued

Aglais; "and I suppose that the quæstor's generous eloquence is the cause of our being received into your house at all. But this does not account for your extraordinary kindness to us. We expected to be barely tolerated as inconvenient and unwelcome guests, who kept better customers away."

"Inconvenient and unwelcome!" said Crispina, who seemed ready to cry, as, looking around the little group, her glance rested again upon Paulus.

"Whereas," resumed Aglais, "you treat my dear children as if you were their mother. Why are we so fortunate as to find these feelings in a stranger?"

The hostess paused a moment. "Honored lady," said she, "the reason is that I once was the nurse of a youth whom I loved as if he were my own child; and it seemed to me as if I saw my brave, beautiful, affectionate nursling again when I saw your son; but so long a time had passed, I nearly fell with fright and astonishment."

Agatha went to the bust of Tiberius, lifted it, and, pointing to the marble image, said in a low, tender voice,

"You nursed him?"

A little cry of dismay escaped the lips of our hostess.

"No one ever thought of looking beneath," said she. "My daughter and I arrange and dust the room. I must remove my poor boy's image. He is indeed forgotten by most people now; but it might harm us, and alas! alas! could not help him, if this silent face, that never smiles at me, never talks to me any more, were to be discovered. Do not speak of this to anybody, I beg of you, good lady, and my pretty one. *You* will not?" added she, smiling, but with tears in her eyes, as she

looked at Paulus. "I feel as though I had reared you." They said they would take care not to allude to the subject at all, except among themselves, and then Aglais remarked :

"You speak in sorrow of the youth whom you nursed. Is he then dead ?"

"*Eheu !* lady, he is dead nearly twenty years ; but he was just about your son's age when they put him to death."

"Put him to death ? Why was he put to death, and by whom ?" asked Aglais.

"Hush ! Mæcenas and the emperor ordered it to be done. Oh ! do take care. The whole world swarms with spies, and you may be sure an inn is not free from them. Things have been more quiet of late years. When I was young, I felt as if my head was but glued to my shoulders, and would fall off every day. As for Crispus, did I not make him cautious how he spake ?"

"But your foster-son ?"

"Ah, poor boy ! Poor young knight ! He was mad about the ancient Roman liberties ; a great student, always reading Tully."

"Was that his crime ?" demanded Aglais.

The hostess wiped her eyes with the sleeve of her *stola manicata*, and said, in a tone little above a whisper, looking round timidly, and closing the door fast,

"Why, Augustus came suddenly one day into a *triclinium*, where he caught a nephew of his trying to hide under a cushion some book he had been reading. Augustus took the book, and found that it was one of Tully's. The nephew thought he was lost, remembering that it was Augustus who had given up Cicero to

Mark Antony to be murdered. There the emperor stood, fastened to the page, and continued reading and reading till at last he heaved a great breath, and, rolling up the book on its roller, laid it softly down and said, 'A great mind, a very great mind, my nephew;' and so he left the room."

"Then it was not your foster-son's admiration of Cicero that caused his death?"

"My foster-son was not Augustus's nephew, you see; but *ehou!* how different a case!—the nephew of a former rival of Augustus. Nor used the emperor's nephew to talk as my poor child would talk. My foster-son used to say that for Augustus to have given up Tully, his friend and benefactor, to be murdered by Mark Antony, in order that he, Augustus, might be allowed to murder somebody else, and then to discover that neither he nor the human race could enjoy justice, nor see peace, nor have safety, till this very same Antony should be himself destroyed, was not a pretty tale. Cicero had sided against and had resisted Julius Cæsar; yet Julius had given back his life to a man of whom Rome and the civilized world were proud. The same Tully had sided *with*, not against, Augustus, and had been the making of him; yet the life which a noble enemy had spared and left shining like a star, a base friend stole, and suffered to be quenched; and this for the sake of a monster who, for the sake of mankind, had to be very soon himself destroyed. This was not a nice tale, my poor Paulus used to say."

"Nor was it; but your Paulus?" cried Aglais. The travellers all held their breath in surprise and suspense.

"Yes."

"What! the youth whom that bust represents, and whom Augustus put to death, was called Paulus?"

"Yes. They said he had engaged in some conspiracy, the foolish dear! But now, lady, I have been led, bit by bit, into many disclosures, and I beseech you—"

"Fear not," interrupted Aglais; "I cannot but cherish a fellow-feeling with you; for, although I have something to ask of the emperor, it is justice only. I, too, look back to experiences which are akin to yours. My son yonder, whom the marble image of your foster-son strikingly resembles, bears the same name, Paulus; and the name of his father was that which headed the first list of those who, the Triumvirate agreed, should die."

"Permit me, now, to ask once more who you are, lady?" said Crispina. "I know well the names upon that list."

"My husband," replied the Greek widow, "was brother of the triumvir Lepidus."

"The triumvir was our master," answered the landlady; "and alas! it is too true that he, the triumvir, was timid and weak, and his son, about whose image you have asked me, knew not, poor youth, when he so bitterly blamed Augustus for sacrificing Tully to Mark Antony, that his own father had given up a brother—that brother whom you married—in the same terrible days, and just in the same kind of way."

"Whose bust, then, do you say is this which is so like my son?" asked Aglais.

"The bust of your son's first cousin, lady. My foster-son's father was your husband's brother."

"No wonder," cried Agatha, "that my brother should be like his own first cousin!"

"No," said Aglais; "but it is as surprising as it is fortunate that we should have come to this house, and have fallen among kind persons disposed to be friends, like our hostess, her good husband, and little Benigna yonder."

"There is nothing which my husband and I would not do," said Crispina, "for the welfare of all belonging to the great Æmilian family, in whose service we both were born and spent our childhood; the family which gave us our freedom in youth, and our launch in life as a married couple. As for me, you know now how I must feel when I look upon the face of your son."

A pause ensued, and then Aglais said :

"Your former master, the triumvir, wrote to my husband asking forgiveness for having consented to let his name appear in the list of the proscribed, and explaining how he got it erased. Therefore, let not that subject trouble you."

"I happen, on my side, to know for a fact," answered the hostess, "that the one circumstance to which you refer has been the great remorse of the triumvir's life. The old man still mumbles and maunders, complaining that he never received a reply to that letter. He would die happy if he could but see you, and learn that all had been forgiven."

Before Aglais had time to make any answer, the landlord appeared, carrying a small *cadus*, or cask, marked in large black letters—

L. CARNIFICIO

S. POMPEIO

COS.

Benigna had previously set upon a separate table, according to custom, fruits, and fictile or earthen cups.

"I thought so!" cried good Crispus. "Women (excuse me, lady, I mean my wife and daughter) will jabber and cackle even when ladies may be tired, and, as I sincerely hope, hungry. Do, Crispina, let me see the ladies and this young knight enjoy their little supper. This Alban wine, my lady, is nearly fifty years old, I do assure you; look at the Consul's name on the cask. Benigna, young as she is, might drink ten *cyathi* of it without hurt. By the by, I have forgotten the measure. Run, Benigna, and fetch a *cyathus* (a ladle-cup) to help out the wine."

"Jabber and cackle!" said the hostess. "Crispus, this lady is the widow, and these are the son and daughter of Paulus Æmilius Lepidus."

The landlord, in the full career of his own jabber, was stricken mute for a moment. He gazed at each of our three travellers in turn, looking very fixedly at Paulus. At last he said,

"This, then, accounts for the wonderful likeness. My lady, I will never take one brass coin from you or yours; not an *as*, so help me! You must command in this house. Do not think otherwise."

And, apparently to prevent Aglais from answering him, he drew his wife hastily out of the room, and closed the door.


Benigna was left behind, and, with winning smiles and a flutter of attentions, the young girl now placed the chairs, and began to cackle, as Crispus would have expressed himself, and to entreat the wanderers to take that refreshment of which they stood so much in need.

They all had the delicate and graceful tact to feel that compliance with the kindness which they had so providentially found was the only way to return it which they at present possessed.

It is historical to add that appetite gave the same advice. Their hunger was as keen as their tact. During supper the mother and son spoke little ; but Agatha, both during the repast and for some time afterward, kept up a brisk conversation with Benigna, for whom the child had taken an inexpressible liking, and from whom she drew, with unconscious adroitness, the fact that she was engaged to be married. That sudden affection of sympathy which knit the soul of David to that of Jonathan seemed to have bound these two together. The landlady's considerate daughter at length advised Agatha to defer further communications until she should have a good night's rest. Paulus seconded the recommendation, and left his mother and sister with their Greek slave Melena and with Benigna, and retired to his own bedroom. This chamber overlooked the inner court, whence the incessant plash of the fountain was heard soothingly through his lattice window, the horn slide of which he left open. The bedroom of the ladies, on the other hand, overlooked the garden and beehives, to which Crispina had alluded. The sitting apartments, opening into each other, in one of which they had supped, stood between ; all these rooms being situated in the projecting west wing, which they entirely filled.

Thus closed the day which had carried to their destination the travellers from Thrace.

CHAPTER IX.

EXT morning, when they met at breakfast (*jentaculum*), there was a marvellous improvement in Agatha's looks. She had been the earliest out of bed; had seen from her window, under a brilliant sunshine, the beautiful landscape unroll itself in the various forms which the landlady had truly though inadequately described; and she then had run down into the garden.

In due time—that is, very soon afterward—she had been chased by the bees, had fled, screaming and laughing, with the hood of her *ricinium* drawn completely over the head by way of helmet against the terrible darts of her indignant pursuers, and had been received in the arms of Benigna, who had heard the cry of distress and had flown to the rescue, brandishing a long, reedy brush, like the mosquito brushes of modern times. Rallying in a bower of trellis-work covered with ivy, whence a wooden staircase led up to the first floor of the house, by way of a landing or platform, over which rose another bower clad in the same ivy mantle—facing round, I say, upon her enemy at the foot of this staircase, she had soon ventured once more into the garden with Benigna, and the two girls, jabbering and cackling much, had gathered a large nosegay of autumnal flowers. With this booty, which Benigna had made so big that Agatha could hardly hold it in her small and elegant hands, the latter damsel had returned to the bower, had seated herself upon a bench, and had begun to sort the

flowers in the relative positions which best showed their tints. Here she relied upon gradation, there upon contrast. Her delicate Greek taste in the performance of this task drew exclamations of delight from Benigna.

"There!" the innkeeper's daughter would cry; "how pretty! That is the way! That so, and then that, and that! They look quite different now! Exactly! I never imagined it!"

When Agatha had finished the arrangement to her own satisfaction, an exploit which was nimbly achieved, "Now, Benigna," said she, with her pretty foreign accent, "sit down here; just do, and tell me all about everything."

Benigna stared, and Agatha proceeded:

"So you are engaged to become the wife of a very good and handsome youth, who in himself is everything that can be admired, except that, poor young man! he is not very courageous, I understood you to say. Now, that is not his fault, I suppose. How can he help feeling afraid if he does feel afraid?"

At this moment the voice of Crispina was heard calling her daughter to help in preparing the breakfast, and Benigna, whom Agatha's last words had thrown into some confusion, as the same topic had done the previous evening, made an excuse and ran away with the light of roses vivid in her cheeks.

Agatha remained and looked out upon the garden, and beyond it upon the sweet country, with its varied beauty. She remained listening peacefully and dreamily to the hum of bees, the twittering of birds, the voices and footsteps in the inn, and inhaling the perfumes of the nosegay which she had arranged, and the cool

freshness of that pleasant morning hour, when the sun behind her and behind the house was throwing the shadows of buildings, sheds, trees, and cattle in long lines towards the Tyrrhenian Sea. While thus calmly resting, admiring, and musing, a lady in a dark robe, with a very pallid face, and large black eyes, stood suddenly in the doorway of the bower, and blocked out the lovely prospect. The stranger smiled, and, holding out a bunch of flowers, said,

"My pretty young lady, I see that the offering I have been culling for you has lost its value. You are rich already. May I sit down in this pleasant shady place a moment to rest?"

"Yes, you may, certainly," said Agatha.

"I suppose," resumed the stranger, "that you belong to this house, my little friend? I am a stranger, and merely lodging——"

"We are lodging, too, and strangers," answered Agatha.

"From your accent," continued the other, "I judge you to be Greek."

"Mother is," replied Agatha; "but brother calls himself a Roman knight, and even noble."

"I knew it!" cried the lady; "you have it written in your countenance. I, too, am a noble lady; my name is Plancina. Have you ever seen Rome?"

"Never."

"Ah! how you will be enchanted. You must come to see me. I have a house in Rome; such a pretty house, full of such curious things! Ah! when you see Rome, you will hold your breath with wonder and delight. I will make you so happy when you come to see me in my pretty house."

"You are a very kind, good lady, I should think," quoth Agatha, looking up from her flowers, and gazing long at the pallid face and the large black eyes; "and if we go to Rome, I and my mother will visit you, perhaps."

"My house is among the willows and beeches of the Viminal Hill," said the lady. "Remember two things—*Viminal Hill*, with its beeches and its willows, and *the Calpurnian House*, where the Piso family have lived for generations. My husband, Piso, has had great losses at dice. I am rich enough to spend a fortune every year for half a century, and we have still at our house all the pleasures that can be thought of. What pains I will take to amuse you! You cannot conceive the splendors, dresses, games, sports, shows, and beauties of Rome; the theatres, the circus, the combats, the great wild beasts of all sorts from all countries, the dances——"

As she pronounced the word "dances," a youthful male voice was heard at a little distance, saying: "While they change horses here, we will stretch our limbs by a stroll in the garden behind the inn. Make haste, worthy innkeeper; order your servants to be brisk."

And almost at the same moment a brilliantly beautiful, dark, eastern-looking girl, in a Syrian costume, appeared at the entrance of the bower. Behind her came sauntering the youth whose voice had been heard. He was of about Paulus's age, had an olive complexion, was sumptuously dressed, and exhibited a strong family likeness in face to the girl. Last followed a woman in middle life, appareled in costly robes suited to travel, haughty, languid, and scornful of mien.

Plancina and Agatha looked up and surveyed the newcomers. The brilliant damsel remained at the entrance of the bower examining its occupants with a hardy, unabashed glance; whereupon Plancina, after a moment's pause, occasioned by the interruption, resumed and concluded her sentence thus:

"No, you can form no idea of the gayeties of Rome; the games, the shows, the theatres, the glories, the pleasures, the jests, the dances."

"But all your good dances come from foreign lands—from the East, indeed," interrupted the damsel, nodding her head repeatedly and sneeringly; "you must admit that."

"Not *all our good* alone," answered Plancina sternly, noticing that the woman in middle life smiled approvingly at the girl who had obtruded the remark; "not *all our good* alone, but *all*. The office of the outside world is to try to amuse Rome."

"And what is Rome's office?" asked the damsel.

"To be amused by them, if she can," answered the Roman.

"Come away, Herodias," said the haughty, languid, and scornful-looking woman; and the two strolled down the middle walk of the garden. The youth who had come with them lingered a moment or two behind, standing in the middle of the gravel-walk and gazing straight into the bower, while he flirted a sort of horse-whip around the heads of one or two tall flowers which were growing outside along the border of the walk.

Plancina looked steadily at him, and he at her. The lad withdrew after a few moments, without a change of feature.

"What starers!" muttered Agatha.

"They have a talent for it, indeed," said Plancina. "A hardy family, putting one thing with another. I think I know who they are. The mother, if she were the mother, called the daughter, if she were the daughter, Herodias. My husband thinks of going to Syria, and, indeed, Tiberius has offered him the procuratorship of Judea; but he would not condescend to go in any smaller capacity than as prefect of Syria. An acquaintance of ours, young Pontius Pilate, wants to get the procuratorship. The minor office would be a great thing for *him*. But my husband, Piso of the Calpurnians, cannot stoop to that. I may meet yonder family again."

"Those people are looking back," observed Agatha, who had paid very little attention to her companion's speech.

Plancina rose, and, going to the entrance of the bower, honored the strangers with a steady glance. The scornful-looking foreign woman in sumptuous apparel met it for a moment, and then turned away. Her son and daughter turned away at the same time.

"Ah! they are gone," murmured Agatha; "they do not like you to gaze so at them."

"It is but a Roman," returned Plancina, "looking at barbarians. They always shrink in that curious manner. And why this Greek lunacy?" muttered she; "and why this Attic mania?"

"Attic what?" asked the half-Greek girl.

"Nothing, my dear," replied Plancina; "only you are not Greek, you know; your father's race and the name you bear settle that question; your very mother is

now, and has long since become, a Roman citizen; you must always prefer Rome to Greece; never forget that rule, or you and yours will perish."

Agatha opened wide the ingenuous young eyes, and seemed to be most seriously alarmed.

Plancina smoothed her pale brows, which had been frowning; and continued with a stern smile:

"I am only giving you a friend's warning. Your mother and brother have a suit to urge at court. There exists a pestilent Greek faction which are all doomed to destruction; tell your mother that you must all beware of being mixed up with them, and you will escape their perdition. A Greek, like your mother, with something to ask, is peculiarly liable to make the mistake of seeking Greek friends. If she do, she is utterly lost, however powerful may seem the prince who patronizes the accursed cabal."

Agatha shrank and trembled, murmuring like an echo Plancina's last adjective—*exitibilis*.

"Do not stare at me so, my little dear," continued Plancina. "There is the Prince Germanicus. Only for him—everybody knows it, and everybody says it; the thing is no secret—Piso, my husband, would be now prefect of Syria; and like Crispus Sallus, when I was a little girl, would have recovered ten times the fortune out of which he has been cheated at dice. I am called a rash, violent, and an untamable woman. The moment, however, that anybody gives you any information about court parties and political factions, every thing I am saying will be mentioned. I do not hide my disgust. Foreign barbarians of all sorts swarm; they creep through postern doors; they privately influ-

ence all the destinies of that world of which Romans have the name publicly of being masters. We are trodden under the feet of Greeks, Jews and Chaldeans; the first beat us by genius, by eloquence, and artistic skill; by general intellectual force and subtlety; the second by superstition-inspired obstinacy, by incredible and unspeakable importunity, by steadfastness in sordid servility, by sorcery, divination, necromancy, and delusion; not all delusion, I grant you; for I myself have seen the demons of Thrasyllus, the Babylonish Greek."

"What!" cried Agatha, "seen demons? And what does a Babylonish Greek mean?"

"A Greek initiated in the Babylonish mysteries."

"And who is Thrasyllus?"

"A magician."

"What is that?"

"A man who calls demons and spirits of the air, as you would call your pet birds, and they come to him."

"May the unknown God love me!" cried Agatha, shuddering. "What are the demons like?"

"Not like our sculptures, believe me," answered Plan-cina. "I dare not tell you; I have seen what no words can say."

She paused, shrugged her shoulders and then added:

"Some forms were like the human, with red fire in the veins instead of blood, and white fire in the bones instead of marrow; eyes they possessed that had no comfort in them. They had the air of being utterly without interest in anything, only that their eyes were filled with fear; yet it seemed to me with knowledge, too; unspeakable fear, immense knowledge; wells and

pools they appeared, full of fear and knowledge. When they glanced upon you, there were pale rays of hatred strangely combined with an expression of indifference, fear, knowledge, and hatred. If you looked at the eyes, when they looked not at you, you saw nothing but an expression of fear and knowledge; but when they did look at you, you saw fear, knowledge, and hatred too. All these faces mocked without smiling and scoffed without enjoyment. Something, I thought, was dripping down the wan cheeks, and there was a look of fixed surprise long ago, of long-past astonishment—the trace left, and the feeling gone. The emotion of boundless amazement had once been there; the signs of it were left all over the countenance, but, if I may so speak, petrified—an immedicable scar, an ineffaceable vestige. The character of the countenance was that of a dead astonishment—the astonishment was dead: it was no longer an active sentiment. It had been some boundless wonder; the greatest which that creature had ever experienced; and the event which had caused it had apparently been the most serious which that being had ever known.”

“What a truly tremendous description!” exclaimed Agatha.

The other made no reply; and before any further conversation could occur between them, a young man, in the dark-brown habiliments of a slave, entered the garden from the inn, and after a hasty glance in various directions, approached the bower. His features were very good; he was well made, of a pleasing address, and had a look of uncommon intelligence. He possessed, in a small degree, and a humble way, that undefinable

air of elegance which mental culture sheds over the countenance ; but with this advantage he betrayed certain symptoms of awkwardness and timidity. Standing at a little distance from the door of the arbor, he made a low bow to Plancina, and said he was the bearer of some commands.

"Commands from whom ?" she demanded.

He answered, bowing low again, by merely stating that his name was Claudius.

Plancina instantly rose and took leave of Agatha, enjoining her not to forget the warnings and counsels she had given. Agatha then saw her hastily reënter the hotel, followed by the handsome slave. Thereupon, buoyantly recovering her spirits, which the presence and the words of this woman had depressed, she ascended the staircase to the landing overhead, where she was joined by her mother from the room within.

Agatha immediately told Aglais everything which had passed between her and Plancina.

"I don't think, my dear child, we shall be likely to trouble her in her nice house among the willows and beeches of the Viminal Hill," said Aglais; and as Paulus now came out upon the landing, a second edition of the narrative was produced for his information.

"Germanicus," said he, "is more like the last of the Romans than in any sense reprehensible or degenerate in his tastes. His love for Greece and his admiration for Athens are an honor to his understanding. They are nothing else. This has nothing to do with preferring barbarians and barbarous influences. My education, *edepol* ! has to be completed ; but I am educated

enough to know that Rome goes for schooling to Greece as much as ever she did. Was not Julius Cæsar himself what they call a *Græculus*? I rather think he was even deeper than Germanicus in Greek lore; but, therefore, all the more fitted for Roman command. The Romans continued to be barbarians long after the Greeks had become the teachers of the world; and were it not for Greece, they would be barbarians still. As for warning us not to dare to make friends for ourselves of this person or that, or of any who appreciate intellect—for this means to appreciate Greeks—it is like warning us to remain friendless, in order that we may the more easily be crushed. It is the wolf's advice to the sheep, to send away her dogs; but I am more dog than that myself. This pale, beetle-browed lady ought to have enjoined those to be timid who know how. Dare do this! Dare do that! For my part, I am not afraid to do anything that I think right."

His mother pressed Paulus's hand affectionately, and his sister's high spirit, which had cowered under the dreadful conversation of Plancina, shone in her eyes as she smiled at him.



CHAPTER X.

MEANWHILE, in the large room within, breakfast had been prepared for the wanderers on a table drawn opposite to and near the open folding-doors of the arbor where they were conversing ; and the landlady now summoned them to partake of that repast.

After breakfast, at which Crispina herself waited on them, Agatha asked where Benigna was.

The landlady smiled, and stated that a friend of her daughter's had called, and was doubtless detaining her, but she would go at once and bring the girl.

"On no account," interposed Aglais ; "Benigna, I dare say, will unfold to my daughter all about it by and by. Unless you have some pressing business to take you immediately away, will you kindly inform us of the news, if there be any, and let us sit in the arbor while you tell us ?"

Accordingly they went into the bower on the landing overlooking the garden, and Crispina told them the news.

In the first place, she told them that the emperor's expected visit to Formiæ was delayed on account of the state of his health. It was now thought he would not arrive for two or three days more, whereas he was to have entered Formiæ that very morning. Crispina added that it would not surprise her if he did not come for a week yet.

In the second place, Queen Berenice with her son,

Herod Agrippa, and her daughter Herodias, who were to have occupied those very apartments, had arrived at the inn, but had now gone forward.

"Mother," said Agatha, "those must have been the persons who, an hour ago, looked into the arbor below this one, when that pale woman was talking to me. The elder called the younger Herodias."

"The same," continued the landlady. "Finding that they cannot be accommodated in my house, young Herod has proposed to proceed with all their train to Formiæ, where—royal though they be—they will be nobody's guests; and as there is not a place of public entertainment in that town, and the weather is delightful, he says they will pitch two or three tents, and one splendid pavilion of silk, on the verge of the green space outside of Formiæ, where the games are to be held."

"Only fancy!" cried Agatha, clapping her little hands.

Thirdly, Crispina told them, with fifty gossiping details, that the entertainments to be given in honor of the emperor and the opulent knight Mamurra, from whom the town took its name, would be stupendous. Formiæ, we may mention, was frequently called *Mamurrarum*, or, *urbs Mamurrana*, from the colonel or chiliarch Mamurra. This gentleman had devoted his boyhood and youth to the cause of Julius Cæsar, and afterward of Augustus in the civil wars; had gained considerable military reputation, and, above all, had amassed enormous wealth.

He had long since returned to his native Formiæ, where he had built a superb palace of marble, good enough for an emperor. In that palace the emperor was now to be his guest. He and Agrippa Vipsanius,

the founder of the Pantheon, had long before been among those by whom, in compliance with the often-announced wish of Augustus, not peculiarly addressed to them, but generally to all his wealthy countrymen, Augustus had expended incalculable sums in adorning Rome with public edifices, for which costly materials, and the science and taste of the best architects, had alike been employed. As Augustus himself said (for himself), "They had found it of bricks, and were leaving it of marble."

"I have read verses by Catullus upon this knight Mamurra," said Aglais.

"So you have, my lady," replied Crispina. "Well, he has just knocked up a circus in the fields adjoining Formiæ, and is preparing to exhibit magnificent shows to his neighbors and to all comers, in honor of the emperor's visit to the town of the Mamurras and the Mamurran palace. Tiberius Cæsar, who is also to be the knight's guest, promises to use this same circus, and to give entertainments of his own there, and Germanicus Cæsar, before marching north to fight the Germans, and drive them out of north-eastern Italy, is to review at Formiæ the troops destined for that expedition, as well as the great bulk of the Prætorian Guards under Sejanus. The guards are uncertain what portion of them the Cæsar may take with him northward."

"Mother, we shall see the shows, we shall see the shows!" cried Agatha.

"Oh! and I am so slow. There is another ingredient yet in my wallet of tidings," exclaimed Crispina; "and only think of my almost forgetting to remember it."

"Remember not to forget it," said the Greek girl,

holding up her finger with an admonishing and censorious look at the landlady. "What is this particular which you have, after all, not forgotten to remember?"

"My charming little lady, it is a particular which concerns the land of your mother, and the people of Greece; for seldom, say they, has that land or people sent to Rome anybody like him."

"You accused yourself of being slow; but now you gallop. Like whom?"

"Like this noble young Athenian."

"Galloping still faster," rejoined Agatha.

"What noble young Athenian?"

"This Athenian, gifted as his countryman Alcibiades, eloquent as our own Tully, acute and profound as Aristotle, honorable as Fabricius, truthful as Regulus, and O ladies! with all these other excellencies, beautiful as a poem, a picture, a statue, or a dream!"

"There's a description!" quoth Agatha, laughing.

"More eloquent than precise, I think," said Paulus.

"Yet sufficiently precise," added Aglais, "to leave us in no doubt at all who is meant by it. It must be young Dionysius, it must be *Dion*."

"That is the very name!" exclaimed the hostess.

"My mother knows him," said Paulus. "My sister and I have often heard of him; so have thousands; but we have not seen him. It is he who carried away all the honors of the great Lyceum at Athens on the left bank of the Ilissus."

"The right bank, brother," said Agatha; "don't you remember, the day we embarked at the Piræus somebody showed it to us, just opposite Diana Aegrota, which is on the left bank?"

"It is all the same," said Paulus.

"Mother, just tell Paulus if left and right are all the same," said Agatha. "That is like Paulus. They are not the same; they never were the same."

"All the ladies at the Mamurran palace," resumed the hostess, "make toilets against him."

"Toils, you mean," said Paulus.

"Yes, toils," continued the hostess. "They are intended as toils for him; they are great toils and labors for the poor girls; the *ornatrius* and they are toilets for the fair dames themselves."

"It is all the same," again quoth Paulus.

"And how do these toilets prosper against Dionysius the Athenian?"

"They tell me he is not aware of the admiration he excites—is totally indifferent to it."

"Base, miserable youth!" cried Paulus, laughing. "These Roman dames and damsels ought to punish him."

"You mean by letting him alone?" asked the landlady.

"No; that would kill him," returned Paulus with a sneer, "being what he is."

"Then how punish him?" asked she.

"By pursuing him with their blandishments," answered Paulus; "that is, if they can muster sufficient ferocity. But I fear the women are too kind here in Italy. I am told that even in the midst of the most furious passions, and while the deadliest agonies are felt by others around them, their natural sweetness is so invincible that they smile and send soft glances to and fro; they look more bewitching at misery (such is their

goodness) than when they see no suffering at all. Yes, indeed! and as the gladiators fight, they have a lovely smile for each gash; and when the gladiator dies, their eyes glisten enchantingly. We have not these entertainments in Greece, and the Greek Dion must soon feel the superiority of the Roman to the Greek woman. Pity is a beautiful quality in a woman; and the Greek ladies do not seek the same frequent opportunities of exercising it as the Italian ladies possess, and, *cheu!* enjoy."

"Is Paulus bitter?" asked Aglais. "Is Paulus witty?"

"Talking of wit, my lady," pursued the hostess, "none but our dear old Plautus could have matched this young Athenian, as Antistius Labio, the great author of five hundred volumes, has found to his cost."

"Labio! Why, that must be the son of one of those who murdered Cæsar," exclaimed Paulus. "My father met his father foot to foot at the battle of Philippi; but he escaped, and slew himself when Brutus did so."

"That was, indeed, this man's father," said Crispina. "The son is a very clever man, and a most successful practitioner in the law courts. Wishing to mortify Dionysius, he said in his presence, at a review of the troops at Formiæ, yesterday, that he was grateful to the gods he had not been born at Athens, and was no Greek—not he!

"‘The Athenians also entertain,’ replied Dionysius, ‘the idea which you have just expressed.’

"‘What idea?’ asked Antistius Labio.

"‘That their gods watch over them,’ replied Dionysius. "Ah, my lady! you should have heard the laughter at Labio; the very centurions turned away to conceal their

grins. Some one high at court then took the Athenian's arm on one side, and Titus Livius's on the other, and walked off with them. Labio did not say a word."

"Pray, can you tell us, good Crispina, whether Germanicus Cæsar is to be a guest of the knight Mamurra?" asked Paulus.

The landlady said she believed he would be for a day or two, and that she thought it was even he who had taken Dion's and Livy's arm, and walked with them apart.

"It is some time," said Aglais, "since Catullus indited those epigrammatic verses against the hospitable and opulent knight. This Mamurra must be very old."

"Yet, my lady," replied Crispina, "he has a ruddy face, a clear complexion, and downright black eyebrows."

"There is a wash called *lixirium*," said Aglais with a meaning smile.

"Ah! but," cried Crispina, laughing with no less knowing a look, "that makes the hair yellow; and the brows of the knight are as black as the jet ornaments in your daughter's hair."

"You can tell us, no doubt," said Paulus, "who those ladies must be that came with Tiberius Cæsar yesterday from that splendid mansion on the Liris. They were in beautiful litters; one of sculptured bronze, the other of ivory, embossed with gold reliefs."

"I know who they are, of course," said the landlady; "they are half-sisters, the daughters of the late renowned warrior and statesman, the builder of the Pantheon, Agrippa Vipsanius, but by different mothers. One of them was the wife of Tiberius Cæsar."

"Was!" exclaimed Paulus; "why, she's not a ghost?"

"She is, nevertheless; her husband has another wife," said the landlady; adding, in a low voice, "a precious one, too; the emperor has required him to marry the august Julia."

"The august!" murmured Aglais contemptuously, with a shrug of the shoulders; "getting old, too."

"I am sure," resumed the landlady, "no one can describe the relationships of that family. Agrippa Vipsanius, you must know, married three times. His second wife was Marcella, daughter of Augustus's sister, Octavia; and this Marcella became the mother of the elder of the two ladies whom you saw. Well, while this Marcella was still living, but after she had had a daughter called Vipsania, Augustus made Agrippa put her away to marry, mind you, this very same august Julia, Augustus's own daughter, and therefore Marcella's first cousin. This Julia, who had just become a widow, having lost her first husband Marcellus, is the mother of the other lady whom you saw, who is called Julia Agrippina, and who thus came into the world the second cousin of her own half-sister. Well, Agrippa, the father of both girls, leaving the august Julia a widow for the second time, Tiberius Cæsar marries Agrippa's eldest daughter Vipsania, and has a son by her, called Drusus; and now, while Vipsania is still living, Augustus makes Tiberius put her away to marry the aforesaid august Julia, the mother of the younger daughter, Julia Agrippina, who is Tiberius's first and likewise second cousin."

"I can hardly follow you in the labyrinth," said Aglais.

"No one can, my lady, except those who make a

study of it," said the landlady, laughing; "but it's all true. Julia, Augustus's daughter, is the wife of the father of both of these girls, first cousin to the eldest of them, mother and cousin-in-law of the younger, and has now also been made wife to the husband of the elder, her own first cousin, and become the sister-in-law of her own daughter and cousin-in-law to the younger."

"*Medius fidius!*" cried Paulus, staring stupidly, "what a tremendous twisted knot! Julia's daughter, half-sister, and second cousin is put away, that the half-sister's husband may marry the half-sister's stepmother and second cousin, or something like that."

"Or something like that," continued Crispina; "but there is no end to it. Tiberius Cæsar is now father-in-law and brother-in-law to one woman, and the husband and stepfather-in-law to another, while the mother of the younger half-sister becomes the sister-in-law of her own daughter."

At this moment Agatha, who was opposite the outer door of the embowered landing, leading down by a flight of stairs into the garden, through the other arbor before mentioned, suddenly exclaimed: "There's Benigna walking in the garden with a man!"

They all looked, and saw Benigna and a young man, wearing a brown tunic and slippers, in a distant alley of fig-trees, talking earnestly as they strolled together. Crispina smiled and said: "I must really tell you that my Benigna's betrothed lover came here unexpectedly at daybreak. He has obtained a week's holiday, and will spend it, he vows, in the inn. We have had to use some skill, I promise you, in finding room for him. He is to sleep in a big trunk with the lid off, stowed away

in the angle of a corridor behind a curtain. He is a very good and well-instructed youth, knows Greek, and is severely worked as one of the secretaries of Tiberius Cæsar, whose slave he is, as I think Benigna has mentioned to my little Lady Agatha yonder."

"When is the marriage of dear Benigna to take place?" asked Agatha.

"Of course the poor young man," replied Crispina, "cannot marry until he gets his freedom. Whenever Tiberius Cæsar allows him to shave his head, and put on the cap* of liberty, we shall have a merry wedding."

"What sort of master is Tiberius Cæsar?" asked Paulus.

The landlady said she was thankful she did not personally know him; but she had never heard any complaint of him made by Claudius, her future son-in-law.

"Your future son-in-law, Claudius!" exclaimed Agatha, in amazement. "Then it was your future son-in-law who had something to say to that Dame Plancina, with the pale face and black eyebrows?"

"Not that I know of, my little lady," returned the hostess.

"Ah! but he had though," persisted Agatha. "He came to the arbor door, and distinctly stated, with a low bow, that he had commands for that lady; and then she said from whom; and he said, 'my name is Claudius;' that is what he said; and then she jumped up in a remarkable fluster and went into the house, and he followed her. But then why she should jump up in a fluster, because a slave said his name was Claudius, I can't imagine," concluded Agatha, pondering.

* Pileus.

The hostess looked surprised.

"I think it could not be because a slave's name was Claudius," she said; "nor do I understand it."

"Is that your demon-seeing dame, Agatha?" asked Paulus, stretching himself; "for I have a notion that when I parried the fellow's blow who wanted to cut me down in so cowardly a fashion, you know——"

"Yes."

"There was a female scream; do you remember it?"

"Yes."


"Well, I have been thinking the woman who screamed was a woman whom your description of that fierce dame in the arbor exactly fits. If so, she was in the train of Tiberius, and of those ladies of whom our good hostess has just given us such an interesting genealogical and matrimonial account."

"Then perhaps the commands for Plancina were from Tiberius Cæsar," quoth Agatha.

Crispina shook her head, but appeared a little serious. A short silence followed. Paulus broke it by asking the landlady to get a letter forwarded for him to the military tribune, Velleius Paterculus, at Formiæ. "I wish," he said, "to take advantage of the delay in the emperor's visit, and to see the country, to fish in the river, to move about far and near; provided Paterculus, to whom I have given a promise to report myself, has no objection."

The hostess brought him some *liviana*, or second-class paper, the best she had, some cuttle-fish ink, and a reed pen, told him to write his letter, and undertook to transmit it at once by a runner belonging to the hostelry. She then left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

HE letter was sent, and in the course of the forenoon the *tabellarius*, or letter-carrier of the inn, returned from Formiæ. Crispina brought him to Paulus, who was in an avenue of the garden watching some players as they contested a game of quoits or *discus*. This avenue connected the garden proper with the open country westward, terminating in a cross hedge of myrtle, through which a little wicket or trellis gate opened. "The man has brought no letter back," the hostler said, signing at the same time to the messenger to deliver the particulars of his errand.

He had found the tribune, he said, and had given him the letter and asked for an answer. The tribune was at the moment inspecting a body of troops. He read the note, however, and immediately took out of his belt both his *stylus* and *pugillaria*, or hand-tablets, when the Prætorian prefect Sejanus, happening to pass, entered into conversation with him, and the messenger then saw Velleius Paterculus hand to Sejanus Paulus's letter. After reading it, the general gave it back, said something in Greek, and went away. The tribune thereupon told the bearer that he would send an answer during the day by a messenger of his own. Paulus thanked the man, who then withdrew.

Our hero, who had prepared his fishing-tackle, a portion of which he had in his hand, remarked that it was vexatious to lose so fine and favorable a day. "Moreover, why should I be a prisoner?" he suddenly ex-

claimed. "I have a triple right to my personal liberty, as Roman citizen, knight, and noble. And what have I done to forfeit it? What have I done except parry the blow of an assassin whom I neither injured nor provoked?"

"Hush!" murmured Crispina; and just then Cneius Piso, having a bandage round his head, and leaning on the arm of Plancina, was seen passing into the inn before them from another part of the garden.

The landlady stood still a moment, till the two figures had disappeared, when she said, with a slight motion of the thumb in the direction of Piso, "He reports himself quite well now, except for a headache. He and his lady leave us in an hour for Rome, and I hope I may say both *vale* and *salve*. You ask what you have done. Have you not come to Italy to claim rights which are indisputable?"

"Is that reason?"

"It is a thousand reasons, and another thousand, too. Alas! do not deceive yourself, as your namesake and cousin did, about the character of the world."

At the door of the inn they separated, she to attend to the multifarious business of her household and he to loiter purposelessly. After a little reflection, he went quite through the house by the inner court, and the central corridor beyond it, and looked into the public-room. At one table a couple of centurions sat playing dice with the *tesserae*, and shouting the names of half-a-dozen gods and goddesses as their luck fluctuated. At another table a powerfully-built, dark, middle-aged man, having a long, ruddy beard streaked with gray, upon whom Asiatic slaves waited, was taking

a traveller's repast, his slaves helping him to costly wine, which he drank with a grimace of dissatisfaction, but in formidable quantities. Other groups were dotted round the large apartment. In order not to draw needless notice, for all eyes turned to him for a moment, except those of the two dice-throwing and bellowing centurions, Paulus seated himself behind an unoccupied table near the door. While idly watching the scenes around him, he thought he heard his name pronounced in the passage outside. He listened, but the noise in the room made him uncertain, and the voice outside was already less audible, as of one who had passed the door while speaking.

Presently he heard, in a much louder tone, the words, "Why, it is not our carriage, after all. Let us return and wait where we can sit down." And the speaker again passed the public-room, coming back, apparently from the porch.

Paulus happened to be sitting close to the door, which was open; a curtain, as was common, hanging over the entrance. This time, in spite of the noise in the room, a word or two, and a name, though not his own, struck him. He fancied some one said, "No harm to her; but still, not the brother—the sister, my trusty Claudius."

Where had Paulus heard those tones before? In itself, what he had overheard was a sufficiently harmless fragment of a sentence. Nevertheless, Paulus rose, left his table, lifted aside the door-curtain, and went into the corridor, where he saw Cneius Piso and Plancina, with their backs to him, walking toward the end of the passage opposite the porch, but he nearly stumbled against

a young man going the other way. This person, who was good-looking, in both senses of the word, wore the sober-colored tunic,* the long hair, and the slippers of a slave. He had in his right hand a stylus; in his left, tablets of citron-wood, opened and covered with blue wax, on which he was reading, with his head bent, some note which he had made there.

"It is my fault, noble sir," said he; "I was stooping over these and did not observe you; I beg you to pardon my awkwardness." And he bowed with an air of humility.

"It is I, rather, who am to blame," said Paulus, scanning steadily the features of the slave, who had made his apology with a look of alarm, and in exaggerated accents of deprecation.

Shortly after this incident, while Paulus was leaning dreamily over the balustrade of the inn's central court, and watching the fountain there, he was struck heavily on the shoulder from behind by an open hand. Turning round slowly, he beheld a man in the very prime of life, who was entirely a stranger to him.

"I was told I should find you here, excellent sir," said the stranger.

Paulus took in at a glance his dress and general appearance. He had a thick brown beard, neatly trimmed, and open, daring, large blue eyes, in which there was nothing whatever sullen or morose; yet a sort of wildness and fierceness, with a slight but constant gleam of vigilance, if not subtlety. On the whole, his face was handsome; it was conspicuously manful, and, perhaps, somewhat obdurate and pitiless.

* *Exomis.*

His stature was good without being very lofty. He had broad shoulders, rather long, sinewy arms, a deep chest, and, altogether, a figure and person not lacking any token of agility, but more indicative of huge strength.

He wore sandals, the laces of which crossed each other up his mighty legs, which were otherwise bare, and a white woollen tunic covered his shoulders, and was belted round his waist.

"And who told you that you would find me here?" asked Paulus; "for a few minutes ago I did not know I should find myself here."

"There goes the youth who told me," answered the other pointing, and at the same moment Paulus saw the slave, against whom he had walked in the passage, cross on tiptoe an angle of the courtyard, and vanish through a door on the opposite side.

"Claudius," continued the stranger, "is an acquaintance of mine, and chancing to meet him as I entered the hostelry, I asked for you."

"And pray who are you, and what do you want with me?" asked Paulus, after the slave, who must, he now felt sure, be the Claudius to whom Benigna was betrothed, had disappeared.

"Who am I?" returned the stranger; "a good many people know my name and my person, too. But that matters not for the present. Your second question is more immediately important. 'What do I want with you?' To deliver to you a letter; nothing more. Understanding that I meant to stroll out in this direction, the distinguished tribune, Velleius Paterculus, requested me to hand you this."

And he produced from a fold in the breast of his white woollen tunic a letter, having a written address on one side, and a thread round its four ends, which thread was knotted on the side opposite to that bearing the superscription. The knot was secured by a waxen seal, upon which the scholarly writer had, in imitation of the deceased minister Mæcenas, impressed the engraving of a frog.

Paulus opened it and read what follows :

“ To the noble Paulus Æmilius Lepidus, the younger, Velleius Paterculus sends greeting :

“ Go where you like, amuse yourself as you like, do as you like—fish, ride, walk, read, play, sing—provided you sleep each night at the Post House of the Hundredth Milestone, under the excellent Crispina’s roof. Be careful of your health and welfare.”

“ So far so good,” said Paulus ; “ I am a prisoner, indeed, but with a tolerably long tether, at least. I am much obliged to you for bringing me the letter.”

“ Imprisonment !” observed the other. “ I have heard a knot of centurions, and also soldiers unnumbered, talk of your imprisonment, and of the blow with which it seems to be connected. You are a favorite, without knowing it, among the troops at Formiæ. One fierce fellow swore, by quite a crowd of gods, that your blow deserved to have freed a slave, instead of enslaving a knight ; that is, to have freed you had you been a slave, instead of enslaving you, who are already a knight.”

“ I feel grateful to the soldiers,” said Paulus. “ You are doubtless an officer—a centurion, perhaps ? ”

“ Well, they do speak freely,” replied the stranger,

“and so do I; therefore you have made a fair guess; but you are wrong.”

“Ah! well,” said Paulus; “thanks for your trouble, and farewell. I must go.”

“One word,” persisted the other. “I am a famous man, though you do not seem to know it. The conqueror in thirty-nine single combats at Rome, all of them mortal, and all against the best gladiators that ever fought in circus or in forum, stands before you. At present I am no longer obliged to fight in person. I keep the most invincible *familia* of gladiators that Rome has known. You are aware of the change of morals and fashions; you are aware that even a senator has been seen in the arena. Some day an emperor will descend into our lists.* Join my family, my school; I am Thellus, the lanista.”

“What!” cried Paulus, his nostrils dilated, and his eyes flashing. “In Greece, where I have been bred, gladiatorial shows are not so much as allowed by law, even though the gladiators should be all slaves; and because some senator has forgotten the respect due to the senate and to himself, and has no sense either of decency or humanity, you dare to propose to me, the nephew of a triumvir, the son of an honorable and famous soldier—to me, the last of the Æmilians, to descend as a gladiator into the arena, and to join your school, *mehercle!* of uneducated, base-born, and mercenary cutthroats!”

The lanista was so astounded by this unexpected burst of lofty indignation, and felt himself thrust morally to such a sudden distance from the stripling, at least in

* This really happened in the course of time.

the appearance of things, that he uttered not one word for several instants. He glared in speechless fury at the speaker, and when at length he found voice and ideas he said :

“ Do you know that I could take you in these unarmed hands, and tear you limb from limb where you stand, as you would rend a chicken—do you know that ? ”

“ I do not,” said Paulus, in slow and significant accents, facing round at the same time upon the lanista with deliberate steadiness, and looking him fixedly in the face ; “ but if you even could, it would suit my humor better to be murdered where I am by a gladiator than to be one.”

“ By the Capitoline Jove ! ” cried Thellus, after another long, doubtful pause, laughing vehemently. “ When I place your skill of fence, about which I have heard a particular account, by the side of your high spirit, you really do make my mouth water to number you among my pupils. I have not a man in my *familia* whom you would not, when a little addition to your years shall have perfected your bodily vigor, stretch upon the sand in ten minutes. But what mean you, after all ? You do not wish to hurt my feelings, because I make you a friendly offer in the best shape that my unlucky destiny and state of life afford me the means of doing ? Do you, then, so utterly despise the gladiator ? Have you reflected on it so deeply ? Who, nevertheless, displays in a greater degree many of the severest and highest virtues ? Do you despise the man who despises life itself, when compared with honor in the only form in which honor is for him accessible ? Answer

that. Do you despise abstemiousness, fortitude, self-control, self-sacrifice, chastity, courage, endurance? Answer that. Who is more dauntless in the combat, more sublimely unruffled when defeated, more invincibly silent under the agony of a violent death, accompanied by the hootings of pitiless derision, and *whose* derision, whose mockery, is the last sound in his ears? Let that pass.

“But who pays a dearer price for the applause of his fellow-men when it is his? Who serves them more desperately in the way in which they desire to be, and will needs be, served? Who gives them the safe and cruel pleasures they demand more ungrudgingly, or under such awful conditions? Who comes forward to be mangled and destroyed with a more smiling face, or a more indifferent mien? Who spurns ease, and sloth, and pleasure, and pain, and the sweet things of life, and the bitter things of death, in order to show what manhood can dare and what manfulness can do, and in order to be thoroughly the man to the last, with the same constant and unconquerable mind, as the very gladiator whom you thus insult? Women can often show heroism in pain while shrinking from danger; and, on the other hand, amidst the general excitement and the contagious enthusiasm of an army in battle, to fight pretty well, and then to howl without restraint in the surgeon’s hands, is the property of nearly all men. Some who face danger badly endure anguish well; and many, again, who cannot support pain will confront danger. But if you wish to name him who does both in perfection, and who practices that perfection habitually, you will name the gladiator. Nor is it pain of body alone,

nor loss of life alone, which his calling trains him to undergo with alacrity. Are you sure that our motives are simply and solely that grovelling lust of gain which you imply? *Mercenary* you dare to term us? *Mercenary!* The gambler is mercenary. Is the gladiator like your high-born voluntary gambler? Is the gladiator deaf to praise? Indifferent to admiration? Reckless of your sympathy? Is he without other men's human ties and affections, as the gambler is? Has the gladiator no parents whom he feeds with that blood which flows from his gashes? No wife whom he is all the time protecting with that lacerated and fearless breast? No children whom his toils, efforts, and sufferings are keeping out of degradation, out of want, and out of that very arena which he treads with a spirit that nothing can subdue, in order that those whom he loves may never enter it?"

While Thellus thus thundered with increasing and increasing vehemence, the clear-faced youth whom he addressed, and who had confronted his words of menace without any emotion except that of instinctive and settled defiance, was and appeared to be overwhelmed. Had Paulus been struck bodily, he could not have felt anything like the pain he suffered. The words of the gladiator smote the lad full to the heart, like stones shot from a catapult.

Thellus gazed thoughtfully at him during the pause which ensued, and then resumed by exclaiming:

"Mercenary! that is, he takes pay. Does the author take pay? answer that. Do the lawyer and soldier take pay? Does the magistrate take pay? Does, or does not, the emperor take pay? Does the vestal virgin herself take

pay? If the gladiator did, and suffered, and was all he does, all he suffers, all he is, in mere sport, and at his own personal expense, I suppose you would respect him. But I, Thellus—I, the gladiator—I, the lanista—would scorn him, and spurn him, and spit upon him. Blame the community who go to these sports, and sit in shameless safety; blame the hundreds of thousands who succeed other hundreds of thousands to applaud us when we kill our beloved comrades, and at the same time, to howl and hoot over those same brave friends whom we kill; blame those who, having cheered us when we slew our faithful companions, yell at us in our own turn when we are slain; blame men for taking us when we are little children, and rearing us expressly to be fit for nothing else; blame men for taking the little ones of captured warriors who have in vain defended their native lands against the discipline and skill of Rome; blame men for mingling these poor infants in one college with the foundlings and the slaves to whom law and positive necessity bequeath but one lot in this life; blame those who thus provide for the deadly arena. Blame your customs, blame your laws, blame your tyrannous institutions, against which the simplicity and trustfulness of boyish years can neither physically nor mentally struggle; blame, above all, your fine dames, more degraded—ay, far more degraded and more abased than the famishing prostitutes who must perish of starvation or be what they are; blame your fine dames, I say, who when, like the august Julia, they import the thick silks of India, are not satisfied till they pick them thin and transparent, before wearing them, lest their garments should conceal their shame; and thus attired, pampered

with delicacies, gorged with food, heated with wine, surfeited with every luxury, reeking and horrible, know not what else to do to beguile the languid intervals of systematic wickedness than to come to the arena and indulge in sweet emotions over the valiant and virtuous fathers of homes and hopes of families, who perish there in torture and in ignominy for their pleasure."

"O, God!" cried young Paulus.

"Well may you," cried Thellus, "be filled with horror. Ah! then, when will a god descend from heaven, and give us a new world? I have one child in my home, a sweet, peaceful, natural-hearted, conscience-governed, loving little daughter. Her mother has gone away from me forever to some world beyond death where more justice and more mercy prevail. The day when I lost her I had to fight in the arena. *Eheu!* She was anxious for me, she could not control her suspense; she saw the execrable Tiberius. Bah! do you think I'm afraid to speak? Of what should I be afraid? Thellus has been at the funeral of fear; yes, this many a day," continued Thellus, raising his voice, "she came to the Statilian amphitheatre against my express command; she saw the execrable Tiberius, contrary to every custom, after I had been victor in four fatal encounters, when I was worn out with fatigue, order me to meet a fresh antagonist; and, looking up among the hundred thousand spectators, I beheld the sweet, loving face; I beheld the clasped and convulsive fingers. But, lo, who came forth to fight against me? Whom had the accursed man provided as my next antagonist? Her only brother, poor Statius, whom Tiberius knew to be a gladiator, and whom he had thus selected for the

more refined excitement of the spectators to fight against Thellus ; but, above all, for his own more refined enjoyment, for the monster had tried and found my poor Alba incorruptible ; and this was his revenge against a wretched gladiator and his faithful wife. Statius was no match for me ; I tried to disarm him ; after a while I succeeded, wounding him at the same time slightly. He fell and his blood colored the sand. I looked to the people ; they looked to Tiberius, waiting for the sign of mercy or execution. I was resolved in any case not to be the slayer of Statius.

“ The prince turned up his thumb, to intimate that I was to kill my wounded opponent. The amphitheatre then rang with a woman’s scream, and the people, with one impulse, turned *down* their hands. I bore Statius in my own arms out of the arena ; but when I reached home, I found my wife was near childbirth, delirious, and raving against me as the murderer of her brother. She died so, in my arms and in her brother’s. She left me my poor little Prudentia, who is dearer to me than all this globe.”

After taking breath, he added, quoting Paulus’s words :

“ But we are a gang of base-born, uneducated, and mercenary cutthroats.”

“ Oh ! forgive, forgive, forgive my words,” exclaimed Paulus, stretching out both hands toward the gladiator.

Thellus took those hands and said :

“ Why, I love you, lad. I love you like a son. I am not high-born enough to be father to the like of you ; but it is not forbidden me to love a noble youth who hates baseness and is ignorant of fear. I’ll tell you

more; but first answer me—are you of opinion, from what has passed between us, that Thellus is an uneducated man?”

“I am afraid that you are better educated than I am.”

“In any case,” replied Thellus, “I am ready to confess that the qualities and virtues exercised by gladiators are exercised for a wrong purpose, and in a wrong way. But, tell me, why is bread made? You will not say because bakers bake it. That would be a girl’s answer; it would be saying that a thing is because it is, or is made because it is made. Why is it made? Because it is wanted. Would bakers bake it if nobody ate it? If nobody wanted to live in a house, would masons build any? or would there even be any masons? You could not, I grant, have music if there were no musicians, if none wanted music. It is the gladiator, unquestionably, who does the fighting in the arena; but if none wanted the fighting, you would have no gladiators. I have told you how we are trepanned in helpless infancy; and not only reared, prepared, and fitted for this calling, but hopelessly unfitted for every other. We supply the spectacle—but who desires the spectacle? It is not we; we are the only sufferers by it; we detest it. But whatever in so dreadful and wicked a pastime can be noble, courageous, unselfish, heroic, we the same, we the victims, give and exhibit; and all the selfishness of it, all that is cowardly in it, all that is cruel, base, despicable, execrable, and accursed, sits on the benches, and applauds or yells in the wedges;* this you, *you*, who go thither, and bring thither us, your victims, this you

* Juvenal, vi. 61.

produce, this is your contribution to it. Ours is honor, valor, skill, and dauntless death; yours, inhumanity, cowardice, baseness, luxurious ease, and a safe, lazy, and besotted life."

"It is true," said Paulus. "Hideous are the pleasures, detestable the glories of this gigantic empire; but *unless, as you say, a God himself were to come down from heaven*, how will it ever be reformed?"

"How, indeed?" answered Thellus.

Little did they dream who a certain child in Syria was, who had then entered his eleventh year!



CHAPTER XII.



SHORT silence followed the concurring exclamations of Thellus and our hero, recorded in the last chapter; and then the lanista said:

"Before I leave you, I will speak one word which came of the chance of uttering while I brought you that letter, but which I would not have pronounced had I found you to be a person of a different sort. You are really Tiberius's prisoner, remember, although it is to Velleius Paterculus you have given your parole. I know, by personal experience and much observation, the men and the things of which you, on the other hand, can have only a suspicion. Now, I conjecture, it is hardly for your own sake that you are in custody. Beware of what may happen to those dear to you, and, as they have given no parole, send them to some place of safety, some secret place. There is no place safe in itself in the known world. Roman liberty is no more; secrecy is the sole safety remaining. *Vale.*"

With these words the lanista departed, leaving our young friend buried in thought. As he left the court of the impluvium to seek his mother, he remarked that Claudius had returned thither, and was occupied in watering some flowers in pots at the opposite angle. "I wonder," thought he, "can that fellow have overheard Thellus?"

Other and more important matters, however, were destined to invite his attention. We have said enough to justify us in passing over with a few words every in-

terval void of more than ordinary daily occurrences of the age and land. What has been related and described will sufficiently enable a reader of intelligence to realize the sort of life which lay before Paulus, his mother, and Agatha during the next few days passed by them together at the inn of the Hundredth Milestone.

Of course, Paulus detailed to his mother what he had observed or heard, especially Thellus's warning. Further, he propounded thereon his own conclusions. The family thought it well to summon Crispina and Crispus to a council; and it was finally resolved that Aglais should at once write to her brother-in-law, Marcus Æmilius Lepidus, the ex-triumvir, and ask a temporary home under his roof for herself and Agatha, with their female slave Melena. Old Philip and Paulus could remain at the inn for some time longer. Aglais, Paulus, and the worthy couple who kept the inn consulted together, carrying their conferences rather far into the night, when the business of the hostelry was over, upon the question what would be the best course to pursue should the triumvir, from timidity or any other motive, refuse shelter to his brother's widow and child? During these conferences Agatha and Benigna went to sit apart, each engaged in some kind of needlework.

It did not seem to the little council probable that Lepidus would refuse the request submitted to him, and if he acceded to it, Crispina assured Aglais that the castle of Lepidus at Monte Circello, covering both the summit and the base of a cliff upon the edge of the sea, was sufficiently capacious, intricate, and labyrinthine to conceal a good part of a Roman legion in complete security.

Moreover, it had escapes both by land and by water; nor could any one approach it without being visible to the inmates for miles. "Considering," reasoned Crispina, "that there is no pretext for ostensibly demanding the surrender of the ladies, who have not committed any offence, and are not, or at all events are not supposed to be, under any supervision, this retreat will afford all the security that can be desired. But Master Paulus must never go near you when once you leave this roof."

Aglais admitted the wisdom of the suggestion. A letter, a simple, elegant, and affecting composition, was written by her, and intrusted to Crispus for transmission. However, as it was the unanimous opinion of all concerned that the family ought not to be detected in any communication with Lepidus, or even suspected of any, it was necessary for Crispus to observe great caution in forwarding the document. Several days, therefore, passed away before an opportunity was presented of sending a person who would neither be observed in going nor missed when gone, and who could at the same time be implicitly trusted; none but old Philip could be found.

Crispus had been on the point of employing Claudius for the purpose, when Crispina resolutely stopped him. "I have a high opinion of that youth," said she, "or I would not consent that Benigna should marry him; but at present he is a slave, and a slave of the very person against whom we are guarding. Moreover, Claudius is young and very timid; he has his way to make, and all his hopes are dependent on this tyr—I mean the prince. I do not wish even Benigna to know anything about

the present business. The more honest any young people are, the more they betray themselves, if cross-questioned about matters which they know, but have been told to conceal. If they know nothing, why, they can tell nothing, and moreover none can punish or blame them for not telling.

“A silent tongue, husband, like mine, and a simple heart like yours, make safe necks. There, go about your business.”

During the delay and suspense which necessarily followed, Paulus fished and took long walks through that beautiful country, many aspects of which, already described by us, as they then were, have forever disappeared. He used to take with him something to eat in the middle of the day, but always returned toward evening in time to join the last light repast of his mother and sister. Each evening saw them reassembled. Four tall, exquisitely tapering poles, springing from firm pedestals, supported four little scallop-shaped lamps at the four corners of their table. The supper was often enriched by Paulus with some delicious fresh-water fish of his own catching. Benigna waited upon them, and, being invariably engaged by Agatha in lively conversation, amused and interested the circle by her mingled simplicity, good feeling, and cleverness. After supper, Agatha would insist that Benigna should stay with them awhile, and they either all strolled through the garden, whence perfumes strong as incense rose in the dewy air, or they sat conversing in the bower which overlooked it. Then after awhile Crispina would ascend the garden-stairs to their landing; and while she inquired how they all were, and told them any news she might have

gathered, Benigna would steal silently down to say good-night, as Agatha declared, to some figure who was dimly discernible standing not far away among the myrtles, and apparently contemplating the starry heavens. Such was their quiet life, such the tenor of those fleeting days.

One evening—the sweet evening of a magnificent autumn day—Paulus was returning across the country, with a rod and line, from a distant excursion upon the banks of the Liris. The spot which he had chosen that day for fishing, was a deep, clear, silent pool, formed by a bend of the river. A clump of shadowy chestnuts and hornbeam grew nigh, and the water was pierced by the deep reflections of a row of stately poplars, which mounted guard upon its margin. There seated, his back supported against one of the trees, watching the float of his line as it quivered upon the surface of the beautiful stream, he heard no sound but the ripple of the little waves lapping on the reeds, the twittering of birds and the hum of insects. There, with a mind attuned by the peaceful beauties of the solitary scene, he had traversed a thousand considerations. He thought of the many characters with whom he had so suddenly been brought into more or less intercourse or contact. He thought much of Thellus, and of his poor Alba, so cruelly sacrificed. He was puzzled by Claudius. He mused about Sejanus, about Tiberius, about Velleius Paterculus, about the two beautiful ladies in the litters; he thought of the third gold-looking palanquin and its pallid occupant; of the haughty and violent, yet, as it seemed, servile patrician and senator, who had attempted suddenly to kill him, out of zeal for Cæsar; of

the singular reverse which had awaited the attempt ; of Queen Berenice, and Herod Agrippa, and Herodias ; of the various unexpected incidents and circumstances which had followed. He thought of his uncle Lepidus, of the fate, whatever it might be, now to attend his mother, his sister, and himself. He revolved the means of establishing his rights and his claims. Ought he at once to employ some able orator and advocate, and to appeal to the tribunals of justice ? Should he rather seek a hearing from the emperor in person, and, if so, how was this to be managed ?

From recollections and calculations, the spirit of his pastime and the genius of the place bore him away and lured him into the realm of daydreams, vague and far-wandering ! Upstream, about a mile from where he was sitting, towered high a splendid mansion. On its roof glittered its company of gilt and colored statues, conversing and acting above the top of a wood.

In that mansion his forefathers had lived.

On one of the streams lay ancient Latium, where he sat, teeming with traditions—a monster or a demigod in every tree, rock, and river ; the cradle of the Roman race, the seed and germ of outspreading conquest and universal empire. On the opposite banks was-unrolled, far to the south, the Campanian landscape, where Hannibal, the most terrible of Romish enemies and rivals, had enervated his victorious legions, and lost the chances of that ultimate success which would have changed the destinies of mankind.

Suddenly, among the statues on the roof, Paulus beheld, not bigger than children by comparison, moving figures of men and ladies in dazzling attire. He per-

ceived that salutations were exchanged, groups formed and groups dispersed. Happening, the next moment, to cast his eye over the landscape, he saw in the distance some horsemen galloping toward the house, through the trees in the distance. Losing sight of them behind intervening clumps of oleander, myrtle, and other shrubs, he turned once more to watch the groups upon the roof. In a short time new figures seemed to arrive, around whom all the others gathered with the attitude and air of listening.

Paulus felt as if he was assisting at a drama. A moment later the roof was deserted by its living visitors, the statues remained alone and silent, gesticulating and flashing in the sun. Tidings must have come. Something must have happened, thought Paulus; and, as the day was already declining, he gathered up his fishing tackle and wended homeward. On the way he met a man in hide sandals, carrying a large staff and piked with iron. It was a shepherd, of whom he asked whether there was anything new. "Have you not heard?" said the man; "the flocks will fetch a better price—the emperor has come to Formiæ."

Full of this intelligence, and anxious at once to consult Aglais whether, before Augustus should leave the neighborhood, he ought not to endeavor by all means now to obtain a hearing from him, Paulus mended his pace; but while he thought he might be the bearer of news, some news awaited him. He passed through the little western trellis-gate into the quoit-alley, and so by the garden toward the house. A couple of female slaves, who were talking and laughing about something like the impudence of a slave, and depend on it a love-

letter it is, but it's Greek, which seemed to afford them much amusement, stood at the door of the lower arbor, which inclosed the foot of the stairs leading up to the landing of his mother's apartments. Noticing him, they hastily went about their business in different directions, and he ran up the stairs, and found his mother and sister talking in low tones, just inside the open door of the upper arbor in the large sitting-room, which, as the reader knows, was also the room where they took their meals.

"I am glad you have returned, Paulus," said his mother. "Look at this; your sister found it about half an hour ago on the landing in the arbor."

And Aglais handed him a piece of paper, on which was written, in a clear and elegant hand, in Greek :

"When power and craft hover in the air as hawks, let the ortolans and ground-doves hide."

Our hero read the words, turned the paper over, read the words again, and said, "I don't see the meaning of this. It is some scrap of a schoolboy's theme, perhaps."

"Schoolboys do not often write such a hand," said Aglais; "nor is the paper a scrap torn off—it is a complete leaf. And, again, why should it be found upon our landing?"

"What schoolboys could come up our stairs? There are none in the inn, are there? Have you been in all day?" asked Paulus.

"No; we were returning from a walk across the fields to see the place near Cicero's villa of Formianum, where the assassins overtook him, and as Agatha, who ran upstairs before me, reached the landing, she ob-

served something white on the ground, and picked it up. It was that paper. Some stranger must have been upstairs while we were away."

"Crispus or Crispina would not have said this to us by means of an anonymous writing. They have given us the same warning without disguise, personally."

"But they spoke only according to their own opinion," returned Paulus. "Coming from some one else, the same advice acquires yet greater importance. Some unknown person bears witness of the danger which our host and hostess merely suspect, and at which Thellus, the lanista, hinted, as perhaps impending, but which even he did not affirm to be a reality."

"That is," added Paulus, "if this bit of paper has been intended for us—I mean for you and for Agatha, because I am not a ground-dove."

"Well, I do not see," said the lady, musing, "what more we can do for the moment. Our trusty Philip is on the way with my letter to your uncle; he may be by this time on the way back. Till he returns, what can we do?"

"I know not," said Paulus. "Have you asked Crispina about this paper?"

"We waited first to consult you," said Aglais; "and," added Agatha, "there is another singular thing—we have not seen Benigna all day, who was so regular in attending upon us. The hostess told us that Benigna was suffering with a bad headache; and when I wanted to go and tend her, Crispina hindered me, saying she had lain down and was trying to sleep."

"What about the lover?" inquired Paulus—"the slave Claudius?"

“He has gone away all of a sudden, though his holiday has not expired. I really suspect that Benigna and he must have had a quarrel, and that this is why he has left the place, and why Benigna is so ill.”

The *clepsydra*, or waterclock, on the floor in a corner, showed that it was now past the time when their evening repast was usually prepared. They were wondering at the delay; when Crispus, first knocking at the door which led from the passage, entered. He seemed alarmed. They put various questions to him which the circumstances rendered natural, showing him the paper that had been dropped on the landing. He said that he thought he could make a pretty good surmise about that matter; but inasmuch as Benigna, who had been crying out her little heart, was much better, and had declared she would come herself when they had supped, and tell them everything, he would prefer to leave the recital to her, if they would permit him.

Meantime, he confirmed the news that the emperor had arrived at the neighboring town, that the festivities had begun at the Mamurran palace, and that in a day or two the public part of the entertainments, the shows and battles of the circus, which would last for several successive mornings and evenings, would be opened. He said it was usual to publish a sort of promissory plan of these entertainments; and he expected to receive, through the kindness of a friend at court (a slave), some copies of the document early next morning, when he would hasten to place it in their hands. While thus speaking to them with an air of affected cheerfulness, he laid the table for supper. Actuated by a curiosity in which a good deal of uneasiness was mingled, since

he would not himself tell them all they desired to know, they requested him to go and send Benigna as soon as possible; and when at last he retired with this injunction, they took their supper in unbroken silence.

Benigna came. The secret was disclosed, and it turned slow-growing apprehension into present and serious alarm.

“What! Claudius a spy! The spy of Tiberius set as a sort of secret sentry over us! Who would have thought it?”

Benigna, turning very red and very pale by turns, had related what she had learnt, and how she had acted. Little knowing either the secret ties between her mother and this half-Greek family, or the interest and affection she had herself conceived for them, her lover had told her that she might help most materially in a business of moment intrusted to him by his master; adding that, if he gave the Cæsar satisfaction in this, he should at once obtain his liberty, and then they might be married. She answered that he must know how ready she was to further his plans, and bade him explain himself, in order that she might learn how to afford him immediately the service which he required. But no sooner had she understood what were his master’s commands, than she was filled with consternation. She informed him that her father and mother would submit to death rather than betray the last scions of the Æmilian race, and that she herself would spurn all the orders of Tiberius before she would hurt a hair of their heads. She mentioned, with a little sob, that she had further informed Claudius that she never would espouse a man capable of plotting mischief against them. Upon this announce-

ment Claudius had behaved in a way "worthy of any thing." He there and then took an oath to renounce the mission he had undertaken. He had neither known its objects nor suspected its villainy. But Benigna, whose mind he thus relieved, he filled with a new anxiety by expressing his conviction that Tiberius Cæsar would forthwith destroy him. However, of this he had now gone to take his chance.

"Did Claudius," asked Paulus, "intend to tell the Cæsar that he disapproved of the service upon which he had been sent, and would not help to execute it?"

"No, sir," said Benigna. "We were a long time consulting what he should, what he could say. He is very timid; it is his only fault. He is going to throw all the blame upon me, and thus he will mention that I, that he, that we were going to be married, and that, in order the more effectually to watch the movements of ladies to whom he personally could get no access under this roof, the bright notion had occurred to him to enlist my services, so as to render it impossible that these ladies should escape him, or that their movements should remain unknown; when lo! unfortunately for his plan, he finds I love these ladies too well to play the spy upon them; that I refused, and even threatened, if he did not retire from his sentry-box forthwith, not only to break off my nuptial engagement with him, but to divulge to the family that they were the objects of espial."

"Which you have done," said Aglais, "even though he has complied with your demands."

Poor Benigna smiled. "Yes," said she, "I was bent upon that the instant I knew; but what my dear, unfortunate Claudius had to say to Tiberius Cæsar was the

point. The Cæsar is not to be told everything. My head is bursting to think what will happen."

Here she broke into a fit of crying. They all, except Paulus, tried to comfort her. He had started to his feet when he first understood the one fact, that this young girl had sacrificed not only her matrimonial hopes, but the very safety of her lover himself, to the claims of honor and the laws of friendship. He was now pacing the width of the room in long strides with an abstracted air, from which he awaked every now and then to contemplate with a thoughtful look the anguish and terror depicted in the innocent face of the innkeeper's little daughter.

At last he stopped and said to her:

"Of what are you afraid?"

"The anger of that dreadful man."

"What dreadful man?"

She answered, with a couple of sobs, "The august, red-faced, big, divine beast."

"But neither you nor your lover have done anything unlawful, anything wrong."

"That is no security," said poor Benigna, shaking her head and wringing her hands.

"That ought to be a security," said Aglais; adding in a mutter, "but often is a danger."

"It is not even allowed by people that it ought to be a security," returned the girl.

"Until it is so allowed, and so practised, too, the earth will resemble Tartarus rather than the Elysian Fields," said Aglais with energy.

Benigna began to cry amid her sympathetic audience, and said:

"It was so like the Elysian Fields yesterday, and now it is like Tar-tartarus! They will kill him."

"For supper, do you mean?" asked Paulus, laying his powerful, white, long-fingered hand upon Benigna's head, while Agatha embraced her. "But then, how will they cook him? How ought a Claudius to be cooked?"


The young girl looked up wistfully through her tears, and said:

"You do know that awful, divine man!"

"I think I half suspect him," answered Paulus. "But the red-faced, big, divine beast, as you call him, will reward Claudius, instead of being angry with him, and this I will show you clearly. Was it not a proof both of zeal and of prudence, on Claudius's part, in the service of his master, to endeavor to enlist your assistance? And again, upon finding, contrary to all likelihood—as Tiberius himself will admit, and would be the first to contend—that you preferred virtue, and truth, and honor, and good faith, to your own manifest and immediate interests, and to success in love—upon finding this extraordinary and unlikely fact occurring, was it not clearly the duty of Claudius to his master to hasten away at once and tell him the precise turn which events had taken? Now, what else has been his conduct, young damsel? What, except exactly all this, has Claudius done? Will he not, then, be rewarded by his master, instead of being eaten for supper?"

"Ah, noble sir!" cried Benigna with clasped hands, "what wisdom and what beautiful language the gods have given you! This must be what people call Greek philosophy, expounded with Attic taste."

CHAPTER XIII.

EXT morning at breakfast, Paulus announced that he had resolved to go to Formiæ and seek an audience of the emperor himself.

"How will you get one?" asked Aglais; "and if you get one, what good will it do you?"

"It will depend upon circumstances," he replied; "for, whether I fail to get speech of the emperor, or, succeeding in that, fail to get justice from him, process of law remains equally open, and so does process of interest. Both means are, I suppose, always doubtful, and generally dilatory. I spoil no chance by trying a sudden and direct method of recovering our family rights; while if I succeed, which is just possible, I shall save a world of trouble and suspense."

After some discussion, his mother yielded to her son's impetuous representations, more with the view of undeceiving him, and reconciling him to other proceedings, than with any hope of a good result.

Paulus had taken his broad-brimmed hat, saying that in three or four hours he expected to be back again at the inn; but that if he did not reappear, they were to conclude that he had found a lodging at Formiæ, and that he was remaining there for some good reason; when the door was flung open, and breathless, radiant, holding an unfolded letter in her hand, Benigna rushed into the room.

"Read, read," she cried, "and give me joy! I was unjust to the noble prince."

She handed the letter to Aglais, who read aloud what follows :

“FORMIÆ.

“Ælius Sejanus, the Prætorian prefect greets Crispus, keeper of the inn at 100 Milestone. Our Cæsar is so pleased with the slave Claudius, that he has resolved to give him his freedom and the sum of fifty thousand sesterces, upon which to take a wife and to begin any calling he may prefer. And understanding that he is engaged, whenever he becomes a free man, to marry your daughter Benigna, and knowing not only that good news is doubly agreeable when it comes from the mouth of a person beloved, but that to the person who loves it is agreeable also to be the bearer of it, he desires that your daughter, whose qualities and disposition he admires, should be the first to tell her intended husband Claudius of his happy fortune. Let her, therefore, come to-morrow to Formiæ, where, at the Mamurran palace, Cæsar will give her a message which is to be at once communicated to the slave Claudius. Farewell.”

“I want to go at once to Formiæ,” cried Benigna.

“Well, I am even now going,” said Paulus ; “and if you intend to walk, I will guard you from any annoyance either on the way or at Formiæ, a town which you know is at present swarming with soldiers.”

This offer was, of course, too valuable not to be cheerfully accepted.

A few moments after the foregoing conversation, Paulus and Benigna left the inn of Crispus together. The roads were full of groups of persons of all ranks, in carriages, on horseback, and on foot. Some of these were bound countryward, but not one for every score of those who were bound in their own direction. No adventure befell them, and in less than two hours they

arrived at their destination. It was easy to find the Mamurran palace, to the principal door of which, guarded by a Prætorian sentry on either hand, Paulus forthwith escorted Benigna.

There was no footway on either side of the street, and as they approached the door they heard the clang of the metal knocker resound upon *the inside*. At the same moment the sentinel nearest to them shouted "*licite*" (by your leave). Two or three persons at this warning shrank hurriedly into the middle of the road; a Numidian rider made his horse bound aside, and the large folding-doors were simultaneously flung open outward.

Immediately appeared the very man in the dark-dyed purple robe of whom the little damsel was in quest, and upon whose personal aspect, already minutely described, we need not here dwell. A handsome gentleman, in middle life, with an acute and thoughtful face, who wore the Greek mantle called *χλαίνα* (*læna*), but differently shaped from an augur's, followed. Both these persons moved with that half-stoop which seems like a continued though very faint bow; and when in the street, they turned, stood still and waited. Then came forth, leaning on a knight's arm, and walking somewhat feebly, a white-haired, ancient, and majestic man, around whose person, in striking contrast with the many new fashions of dress lately become prevalent, a snowy wool-len toga, with broad violet borders, flowed. Under this toga, indeed, was a tunic richly embroidered with gold, and having painted upon it the head of the idol called the Capitoline Jove, half hidden by a wide double stripe of scarlet silk.

When this personage had come into the street, all

those who chanced to be there uncovered. Tiberius, the gentleman in the Greek mantle, and the knight himself, upon whose arm the object of all this reverence continued to lean, did the same; and it was thus that Paulus, who had already guessed from frequent descriptions formerly received, knew for certain that he beheld for the first time Augustus Cæsar, sovereign of three hundred million human beings, and absolute master of the known world. In a moment those who formed the personal company of the emperor resumed their head-gear; some soldiers who happened to be passing did the same, and proceeded upon their respective errands; but the inhabitants remained gazing until the group began to move on foot up the street in the direction of the temporary circus which had been completed by the knight Mamurra in some fields northwest of the town.

Paulus turned to Benigna and said: "You perceive the red-faced—ahem! the great man. He does not know you, though you know him. Shall I tell him who you are? Indeed, I have not come hither merely to stare about me; so wait you here."

He thereupon left her, and quickly overtaking, and then passing before, the group in which was Augustus, turned round and stood directly in their way, hat in hand; but all his sensations were different from what he expected. He grew very red and shamefaced, and felt a sudden confusion that was new to his experience. As it was impossible to walk over him, they, on their part, halted for a moment, and looked at him with an expression of surprise which was common to them all, though, indeed, not in the same degree. The person

who seemed the least astonished was the emperor; and the person who seemed more so than any of the rest was Tiberius. Some displeasure, too, seemed to flash in the glance which he bent upon the youth.

But Paulus, though abashed, did not lose presence of mind to such an extent as to behave stupidly. He said :

“ I ask our august emperor’s pardon for interrupting his promenade, in order to report to Tiberius Cæsar the execution of an order. Yonder is Crispus’s daughter, illustrious sir,” he added, turning toward Tiberius; “ she has come hither according to your own commands.”

“ True,” said Tiberius; “ let her at once seek the prefect Sejanus, who will give the necessary instructions.”

Paulus’s natural courage and enterprising temper had carried him thus far; but his design of accosting and directly addressing Augustus Cæsar now seemed, when he had more speedily found an opportunity of doing so than he could have dared to hope, a strange and difficult undertaking. How he should procure access to the emperor had been the problem with him and his family heretofore; but now, when the access was already achieved, and when he had only to speak—now, when his voice was sure to reach the ears of the emperor himself—he knew not what to say or how to begin. He had thought of splendid topics, of deductions which he would draw, certain arguments which he would urge—a matter very plain and easy: in fine, a statement simple, brief, and conclusive; but all this had vanished from his mind. There before him, holding back the folds of his toga with one white hand, upon the back

which more than seventy years had brought out a tracery of blue varicose veins—a modern doctor would call them—with the other hand, which was gloved, and grasping the fellow glove, laid upon the arm of the knight already mentioned, stood the person who, under forms, the republican semblance of which he carefully preserved, exercised throughout the whole civilized and nearly the whole known world; over at least two if not three hundred million souls, a power as uncontrolled and as absolute for all practical purposes as any which, before him or after him, ever fell to man's lot; enthusiastically guarded and religiously obeyed by legions before whom mankind trembled, and whose superiors as soldiers had not been seen then and have not been seen since; the perpetual tribune of the people, the prince, senator, perpetual consul, the supreme judge, the arbiter of life and death, the umpire in the greatest concerns between foreign disputants travelling from the ends of the earth to plead before him; the dispenser of prefectures, provinces, proconsulates, tetrarchies, and kingdoms; treated by kings as those kings were themselves treated by the high functionaries whom they had appointed or confirmed, and could in an instant dismiss; the unprincipled, cruel, wicked, but moderate-tempered, cold-humored, cautious, graceful-mannered; elegant-minded, worldly-wise, and politic prince, who paid assiduous court to all the givers and destroyers of reputation—I mean to the men of letters. There he stood, as we have described him, holding his toga with one hand and leaning upon Mamurra's arm with the other; and Paulus stood before him, and Paulus knew not what to say; hardly, indeed—so quickly the sense

of bashfulness, confusion, depression had gained upon him—hardly how to look.

“If you have heard,” observed Tiberius at length, “pray stand aside.”

Paulus, who, while Tiberius was speaking, had looked at him, now glanced again toward the emperor, and still hesitated, made a shuffling bow, and stood partly aside.

“What is it you wish to say?” asked Augustus, in a somewhat feeble voice, not at all ungraciously.

“I wish,” said Paulus, becoming very pale, “to say, my sovereign, that my father’s property in this very neighborhood was taken away after the battle of Philippi and given to strangers, and to beg of your justice and clemency to give back that property or an equivalent to me, who am my dead father’s only son.”

“But,” said Augustus, smiling, “half the land in Italy changed hands about the time you mention. Your father fought for Brutus, I suppose?”

“My father fought for you, my lord,” said Paulus.

“Singular!” exclaimed Augustus. “But this is not a court of justice—the courts are open to you.”

At this moment Sejanus and one whom Paulus presumed to be in Rome, Cneius Piso, attended by a slave, appeared from a cross street. The slave approached quickly, holding a pigeon; and having caught the eye of Augustus, who beckoned to him, he handed the bird to the emperor.

Paulus withdrew a little, but lingered near the group. Augustus, disengaging a piece of thin paper from the pigeon’s neck, said:

“From Illyricum, I suppose. We shall now learn

what progress those Germans have made. O Varus, Varus!" added he, in words which he had of late often been heard to repeat, "give me back the legions, *redde legiones! redde legiones!*"

A breathless silence lasted while Augustus perused the message taken from the neck of the carrier-pigeon. As he crushed the paper in his hands, he muttered something; and while he muttered, the scorbutic face of Tiberius (perhaps scrofulous would better render the epithet used by Tacitus) burned ominously. In what the emperor said Paulus caught the words "danger to Italy, but Germanicus knows how."

"Varus lost the legions a thousand times a thousand paces westward of this irruption," said Tiberius.

"A calamity like that," said Augustus, "is felt far and near. The whole empire suffers, nor will it recover in my time. Ah! the legions."

Paulus perceived that he himself was now forgotten; moreover, looking back, he saw the poor young damsel, left by him at the door of the Mamurran palace, still standing alone and unprotected; but some fascination riveted him.

In a moment a great noise was heard, which lasted a couple of minutes; a mighty roar, indistinct, blended, hoarse, as of tens of thousands of men uttering one immense shout. It was, had it lasted, like the sound of the sea breaking upon some cavernous coast.

Upon a look of inquiry and surprise from the emperor, Sejanus sent the slave who had brought the carrier-pigeon to ascertain the cause, and before the sound had ceased the messenger returned, and reported that it was only Germanicus Cæsar riding into camp. Augustus

fixed his eyes on the ground, and Tiberius looked at Sejanus and at Cneius Piso.

The emperor, after a second or two of musing, resumed his way toward the rustic circus and the camp, attended by those around.

Paulus felt he had not gained much by his interview. He now touched the arm of Sejanus, who was about following the imperial group, and said, pointing toward the spot where Benigna still stood waiting:

"Yonder is Crispina's daughter, who is here in obedience to your letter."

Sejanus answered this reminder with a sour and peculiar smile.

"Good," said he; "she has come to announce the fine news to her betrothed. Let her tell him that he has only to break a horse for Tiberius Cæsar to obtain his freedom. I have no time to attend any more to slaves and their mates. She has now but to ask for Claudius at that palace. He has orders to expect her, and to receive from her mouth the pleasing information I have just given you."

Saying this, he walked away.

Our hero conceived some undefined misgiving from these words, or rather from the tone, perhaps, in which the prefect had uttered them. Unable to question the speaker, he slowly returned to poor little Benigna, and said, "Well, Benigna, I have ascertained what you have to do; and, first of all, Claudius expects you within."

As he spoke, he knocked at the door. This time only one leaf of it was opened, and a slave, standing in the aperture, and scanning Paulus and his companion, demanded their business; while the sentries on either

hand at the sculptured pillars, or *antæ* of the porch, looked and listened superciliously.

"Is the secretary-slave Claudius here?" asked the youth.

Before the porter could reply, steps and voices resounded in the hall within, and the porter sprang out of the way, flinging almost into Paulus's face the other leaf of the door and bowing low. Three gentlemen, two of whom apparently were half drunk, their faces flushed, and their arms linked together, appeared staggering upon the threshold, where they stood awhile to steady themselves before emerging into the street.

"I tell you, my Pomponius Flaccus," said he who was in the middle—a portly man, with a good-natured, shrewd, tipsy look—"it is all a pretty contrivance, and there will be no slaughter, for the beast is to be muzzled."

"And I tell you, my Lucius Piso," returned he on the left, a wiry drinker, "my governor of Rome, my dedicatee of Horace—"

"I am not the dedicatee of Horace," interrupted the other; "poor Horace dedicated the art-poetical to my two sons."

"How could he do that?" broke in Pomponius. "You see double. Two sons, indeed! How many sons have you? tell me that. Again, how could one man dedicate a single work to a double person? answer me that. You know nothing whatever about poetry, except in so far as it is fiction; but we don't want fiction in these matters. We want facts; and it is a fact—a solemn fact—that the slave will be devoured."

"I hold it to be merely a pleasant fiction," retorted Piso fiercely.

"Then I appeal to Thrasyllus here," rejoined the other. "O thou Babylonian seer! will not Claudius the slave be devoured in the circus before the assembled people?"

At these words our hero looked at Benigna, and Benigna at him, and she was astounded.

He who was thus questioned—a man of ghastly face, with long, black hair hanging down to his shoulders, and sunken, wistful, melancholy eyes—wore an Asiatic dress. He was not intoxicated, and seemed to have fallen by chance into his present companionship, from which he appeared eager to disengage himself.

Gently shaking off the vague hand of Pomponius Flaccus, he acted as the oracles did.

"You are certainly right," he said; but he glanced at Lucius Piso while speaking, and then stepped quickly into the street, which he crossed.

Each of the disputants naturally deemed the point to have been decided in his own favor.

"You hear?" cried Flaccus; "the horse is to paw him to death, and then to devour him alive."

"How can he?" said Piso. "How can he, after d—d—death, devour him alive? Besides, Thrasyllus declared that I was right."

"Why," shouted Flaccus, "if we had not been drinking together all the morning, I should think you had lost your senses."

"Not by any means," said Piso; "and I will prove to you by logic that Claudius the slave" (again at this name our hero and poor little Benigna looked at each other—she starting and turning half-round, he merely directing a glance at her) "that Claudius the slave will

not and cannot be devoured by Sejanus—I mean that beast Sejanus.”

Paulus, chancing to look toward the two Prætorian sentries, whose general he supposed to be mentioned, observed them covertly smiling. More puzzled than ever, he gave all his attention to the tipsy dispute which was raging in the palace doorway.

“Well, prove it then,” roared Flaccus, “with your logic!”

“Have I not a thumb?” resumed Lucius Piso; “and can I not turn it down in the nick of time, and so save the wretch?”

“Ho! ho! ho!” laughed out the other; “and what notice will a horse take of your thumb? Is this horse such an ass as to mind whether your thumb be up or down, though you are governor of Rome?”

“Perhaps you think,” retorted Piso, in a tone of concentrated bitterness, “with your rules of logic, that the horse is not properly trained to his manners?”

“Have I not told you,” said Flaccus, “in spite of your rules of thumb, that the horse is not an ass?”

The rudeness and coarseness of Pomponius Flaccus had succeeded in sobering Lucius Piso. He here remained a moment silent, drew himself up with dignity to the full height of his portly person, and at last said:

“Enough! When you have drunk a little more you will be able to understand a plain demonstration. But whom have we here? Why, it is our glorious Apicius, whose table no other table rivals for either abundance or delicacy. Who is your venerable friend, Apicius?”

This was addressed to a dyspeptic-looking youth, magnificently attired, who, in company with a person

in the extreme decline of life, approached the door. Paulus and Benigna stood aside, finding themselves still constrained to listen while waiting for room to enter the blocked-up door of the palace.

"Is it possible," replied Apicius, "that you forget Vedius Pollio, who, since you mention my poor table, has often kindly furnished it with such lampreys as no other mortal ever reared?"

The old man, whose age was not redolent of holiness, but reeking with the peculiar aroma of a life passed in boundless and systematic self-indulgence, leered with running, bloodshot eyes, and murmured that they paid him too much honor.

"Sir, you feed your lampreys well," said Pomponius Flaccus, "in your Vesuvian villa. They eat much living, and they eat well dead."

"I assure you," said Pollio, "that nothing but humorous exaggerations and witty stories have been circulated upon that subject. I can, with the strictest accuracy, establish the statement that no human being ever died merely and simply in order that my lampreys should grow fat and luscious. On the other hand, I do not deny that if some slave, guilty of great enormities, had in any event to forfeit life, the lampreys may in such cases, perhaps, have availed themselves of the circumstance. An opportunity might then arise which they had neither caused nor contrived."

"The flavor, in other words, never was the final cause of any slave's punishment," said Lucius Piso.

"You use words, sir," said Pollio, "which are correct as to the fact and philosophical as to the style."

"Talking of philosophy," said Apicius, "do you hold with this young Greek, this Athenian Dion who has

lately visited the court, that man eats in order to live? or with me that he lives in order to eat?"

"Horror of horrors!" murmured Flaccus, "the Athenian boy is demented."

"Whenever there is anything to eat with you, my Apicius," said Lucius Piso, "unless there be something to drink with my Pomponius here, may I be alive to do either the one or the other."

"Why not do both?" wheezed Vedius Pollio. "Whither are you even now going?"

"To the camp for an appetite," said Pomponius Flaccus, descending the steps out of the palace hall into the street, and reeling against Paulus, who held him from staggering next against Benigna.

"What do you two want here?" he suddenly asked, steadying himself.

"I am accompanying," replied Paulus, "this damsel, who comes hither by Cæsar's order."

"What Cæsar?" asked Pomponius.

"Tiberius Claudius Nero," returned Paulus.

He naturally supposed that this formal-sounding answer would have struck some awe into the curious company among whom he had so unwittingly alighted with his rustic charge.

"What!" exclaimed Pomponius Flaccus, "Biberius Caldus Mero, say you?"

Paulus started in amazement.

"*Ebrius*, drunk," continued Piso, "*ex quo*—How does it go on? *ex quo*—"

"*Ex quo*," resumed Pomponius, solemnly, "*semel factus est*." *

* Suetonius, Pliny and Seneca all attest the currency of this and similar jokes against Tiberius during his very lifetime.

The astonishment of Paulus and Benigna knew no bounds. Was it possible that in the very precincts of Cæsar's residence for the time, at the door of an imperial palace, within hearing of two Prætorian sentries, in the public street and open daylight, persons should be found, not reckless outcasts maddened by desperation, but a whole company of patricians, who, correcting each other as they might do in reciting a popular proverb or an admired song, should speak thus of the man to whom gladiators, having not an hour to live, cried, "As we die we salute thee"? The man at whose name even courageous innocence trembled?

"I said," repeated Paulus, after a pause, "Tiberius Claudius Nero."

"And I said," replied Pomponius, "Biberius Caldus Mero."

"Drunk but once," added Lucius Piso, who had evidently quite recovered from his own inebriation.

"Since ever he was so first," concluded Pomponius Flaccus.

A general laugh, in which all present joined save Paulus and Benigna, greeted this sally, and, in the midst of their hilarity, an elegant open chariot of richly sculptured bronze, the work being far more costly than the material, drawn by two handsome horses and driven by a vigorous and expert charioteer, came swiftly down the street in the contrary direction of the camp, and stopped opposite the door.

As the horses were pulled back upon their haunches, a youth, tall, well made and eminently graceful, sprang to the ground. He had a countenance in the extraordinary beauty of which intellect, attempered by a

sweet, grave and musing expression, played masterful and luminous. He was neatly but gravely dressed, after the Athenian fashion. The four personages at the door, who were, by the by, far more floridly arrayed, and wore various ornaments, nevertheless looked like bats among which a bird of paradise had suddenly alighted. No gayety of attire could cover the unloveliness of their minds, lives and natures, nor could the plainness of his costume cause the newcomer to be disregarded or mistaken anywhere. In the whole company Lucius Piso alone was a man of sense, solid attainments and spirit, though he was a hard drinker. Even the others, driveling jesters as they were, became sober now at once; they uncovered instinctively and greeted the youth as he passed with an obeisance as low as that performed by the *ostiarius*, who stood ready to admit him. When, returning these salutes, he had entered the palace, Piso said, for the information of Vedius Pollio, who had come from Pompeii, "That is he."

"What! the young Athenian philosopher of whom we have heard so much?"

"Yes. Dionysius; young as he is, I am told that he is certain to fill the next vacancy in their famous Areopagus."

"He is high in Augustus's good graces, is he not?" asked Pollio.

"Augustus would swear by him," said Flaccus. "It is lucky for all of us that the youth has no ambition, and is going away again soon."

"What does Biberius say of him?" inquired Apicius.

"Say? Why, what does he ever say of any one, at least of any distinguished man?"

"Simply not a word."

"Well, think, then; what does he think?"

"Not lovingly, I suspect. Their spirits, their geniuses, would not long agree. If he was emperor, Dionysius of Athens would not have so brilliant a reception at court."

"But is it, then, really brilliant? Does one so young sustain his own part?" asked Pollio.

"You never heard any person like him; I will answer for that," replied Lucius Piso. "He is admirable. I was amazed when I met him. Augustus, you know, is no dotard, and Augustus is enchanted with him. The men of letters, besides, are all raving about him, from old Titus Livy down to L. Varius, the twiddler of verses, the twiddle-de-dee successor of our immortal Horace and our irreplaceable Virgil. And then Quintus Haterius, who has scarcely less learning than Varro (and much more worldly knowledge)—Haterius, who is himself what erudite persons rarely are, the most fascinating talker alive, and certainly the finest public speaker that has addressed an assembly since the death of poor Cicero, declares that Dionysius of Athens——"

"Ah! enough! enough!" cried Apicius, interrupting; "you make me sick with these praises of airy, intangible nothings. I shan't eat comfortably to-day. What are all his accomplishments, I should like to know, compared to one good dinner?"

"You will have long ceased to eat," retorted Piso, "when his name will yet continue to be pronounced."

"And what good will pronouncing do, if you are hungry?" said Apicius.

"What has he come to Italy for?" persisted old Pollio.

"You know," said Piso, "that all over the East from immemorial time, some great, mysterious and stupendous being has been expected to appear on earth about this very date."

"Not only in the East, good Piso," said Pollio; "my neighbor in Italy, you know, the Cumæan Sibyl, is construed now never to have had any other theme."

"You are right," returned Piso; "I meant to say that the prevailing notion has always been that it is in the East this personage will appear, and then his sway is to extend gradually into every part of the world. Old sayings, various warning oracles, traditions among common peasants, who cannot speak each other's languages and don't even know of each other's existence; the obscure songs of the sibyls, the dream of all mankind, the mystical presentiments of the world concur, and have long concurred, upon that singular subject. Moreover, the increasing corruption of morals, to which Horace adverts," added Piso, "will and must end in dissolving society altogether, unless arrested by the advent of some such being. That is manifest. Haterius and others who are learned in the Hebrew literature tell me that prodigies and portents, so well authenticated that it is no more possible to doubt them than it is to doubt that Julius Cæsar was murdered in Rome, were performed by men who, ages ago, much more distinctly and minutely foretold the coming of this person at or near the very time in which we are living; and, accordingly, that the whole nation of the Jews (convinced that those who could perform such things must have enjoyed more than mortal knowledge and power) fully expect and firmly believe that the being predicted

by these workers of portents is now immediately to appear. Thus, Haterius—”

“No,” said Pomponius Flaccus, shaking his head, looking on the ground, and pressing the tip of his forefinger against his forehead, “*that is not Haterius’s argument, or, rather, that is only the half of it.*”

“I now remember,” resumed Lucius Piso; “you are correct in checking my version of it. These ancient seers and wonder-workers had also foretold several things that were to come to pass earlier than the advent of the great being, and these things, having in their respective times all duly occurred, serve to convince the Jews, and, indeed, have also convinced many philosophic inquirers, of whom Dionysius is one, studying the prophetic books in question, and then exploring the history of the Hebrews, to see whether subsequent events really correspond with what had been foretold—that seers who could perform the portents which they performed in their day, and who besides possessed a knowledge of future events verified by the issue, were and must be genuinely and truly prophets, and that their predictions deserved belief concerning this great, mysterious, and much-needed personage, who is to appear in the present generation. And then there is the universal tradition, there is the universal expectation, to confirm such reasonings,” added Piso.

The astounding character, as well as the intrinsic importance and interest, of this conversation, its reference to his half-countryman Dionysius, of whom he had heard so much, and the glimpses of society, the hints about men and things which it afforded him, had prevented Paulus from asking these exalted gentlefolk to

make room for him and Benigna to pass, and had held him and, indeed, her also, spellbound.

"But how all this accounts, most noble Piso, for the visit of the Athenian to the court of Augustus, you have forgotten to say," remarked Pollio.

"He obtained," replied Piso, "the emperor's permission to study the Sibylline books."

"What a pity," said Flaccus, "that the first old books were burnt in the great fire at Rome!"

"Well," resumed Lucius Piso, "he brought this permission to me, as governor of Rome, and I went with him myself to the quindecemviri and the other proper authorities. Oh! as to the books, it is the opinion of those learned in such matters that there is little or nothing in the old books which has not been recovered in the collection obtained by the senate afterward from Cumæ, Greece, Egypt, Babylon, and all places where either the sibyls still lived or their oracles were preserved."

"But after all," said Pollio, "are not these oracles the ravings of enthusiasm, if not insanity?"

"Cicero, although in general so sarcastic and disdainful, so incredulous and so hard to please," answered Piso, "has settled that question."

"He has, I allow it," added Pomponius Flaccus, "and settled it most completely. What a charming passage that is wherein the incomparable thinker, matchless writer, and fastidious critic expresses his reverential opinion of the Sibylline books, and demonstrates with triumphant logic their claims upon the attention of all rational, all clear-headed and philosophic inquirers!"

"I am not a rational, or clear-headed, or philosophic inquirer," broke in Apicius. "Come, do come to the camp; and do pray at last allow this foreign-looking young gentleman and rustic damsel to enter the doorway."

And so they all departed together.

The *atriensis* had meanwhile summoned the master of admissions, who beckoned to Paulus, and he, followed by Benigna, now entered the hall, which was flagged with lozenge-formed marbles of different hues, and supported by four pillars of porphyry. The adventurers passed the perpetual fire in the ancestral or image-room, and saw the images of the Mamurras, dark with the smoke of many generations; they crossed another chamber hung with pictures, and went half round the galleried and shady impluvium, inclosing a kind of internal garden, where, under the blaze of the sunlight, from which they were themselves sheltered, they beheld, like streams of shaken diamonds, the spray of the plashing fountains, the statues in many-tinted marble, and the glowing colors of a thousand exquisite flowers. Near the end of one wing of the colonnaded quadrangle they arrived at a door, which they were passing when their guide stopped them, and as the door flew open to his knock, he made them a bow and preceded them through the aperture.

They noticed, as they followed, that the slave who had opened this door was chained to a staple. Several slaves, who scarcely looked up, were writing in the room which they now entered.

The master of admissions, glancing round the chamber, said, addressing the slaves in general, "Claudius is

not here, I perceive ; let some one go for him, and say that the daughter of Crispus, of the One Hundredth Milestone, has been charged to communicate to him the pleasure of Tiberius Cæsar touching his immediate manumission; and that I, the master of admissions in the Mamurran palace, am to add a circumstance or two which will complete the information the damsel has to give. Let some one, therefore, fetch Claudius forthwith, and tell him that he keeps us waiting."

During this speech, which was rather pompously delivered, Paulus noticed that, close to a second door in the chamber at the end opposite to that where they had entered, a young slave was seated upon a low settle, with a hide belt round his waist, to which was padlocked a light but strong brass chain, soldered at the nether link to a staple in the floor. This slave now rose, and opening the door, held it ajar till one of the clerks, after a brief whisper among themselves, was detached to execute the errand which the steward had delivered. The slave closed the door again, the clerks continued their writing, the steward half shut his eyes, and leaned against a pillar in an attitude of serene if not sublime expectation; and Paulus and Benigna waited in silence.

During the pause which ensued, Paulus beheld the steward suddenly jump out of his dignified posture, and felt a hand at the same time laid lightly on his own shoulder. Turning round, he saw the youth who had a few minutes before descended from the bronze chariot.

"Ought I not to be an acquaintance of yours?" asked the newcomer with an agreeable smile. "You are strikingly like one whom I have known. He was a

valiant Roman knight, once resident in Greece; I mean Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, who helped, with Mark Antony, to win the great day of Philippi."

"I am, indeed, his only son," said Paulus.

"You and a sister, I think," returned the other, "had been left at home, in Thrace, with your nurse and the servants, when some business, a little more than three years ago, brought your father and his wife, the Lady Aglais, to Athens. There I met them. Alas! he is gone. I have heard it. But where are your mother and your sister?"

Paulus told him.

"Well, I request you to say to them that Dionysius of Athens—so people style me—remembers them with affection. I will visit them and you. Do I intrude if I ask who is this damsel?" (glancing kindly toward Benigna, who had listened with visible interest.)

Paulus told him, in a few rapid words, not only who she was, but, with distinct details, upon what errand she had come.

He had scarcely finished when Claudius, the slave, arrived, breathless, in obedience to the summons of the magister.

"The orders of Tiberius Cæsar to me," observed this functionary in a slow, loud voice, but with rather a shamefaced glance at Dion, "are, that I should see that you, Claudius, learnt from this maiden the conditions upon which he is graciously pleased to grant you your liberty, and then that I should myself communicate something in addition."

"O, Claudius!" began Benigna, blushing scarlet, "we, that is, not you, but I—I was not fair, I was not

just to Tib—that is—just read this letter from the illustrious prefect Sejanus to my father.”

Claudius, very pale and biting his lip, ran his eye in a moment through the document, and giving it back to Benigna awaited the communication.

“Well,” said she, “only this moment have I learnt the easy, the trifling condition which the generous Cæsar, and tribune of the people, attaches to his bounty.”

There was a meaning smile interchanged among the slaves, which escaped none present except Benigna; and Claudius became yet more pallid.

“The prefect Sejanus has just told Master Paulus,” pursued the young maiden, “that you have only to break a horse for Tiberius Cæsar to obtain forthwith your freedom, and fifty thousand sesterces, too,” she added in a lower voice.

A dead silence ensued, and lasted for several instants.

Paulus Æmilius, naturally penetrating and of a vivid though imperfectly-educated mind, discerned this much, that some mystery, some not insignificant secret, was in the act of disclosure. The illustrious visitor from Athens had let the hand which lay on Paulus’s shoulder fall negligently to his side, and with his head thrown a little back, and a somewhat downward-sweeping glance, was surveying the scene. He possessed a far higher order of intellect than the gallant and bright-witted youth who was standing beside him; and had received, in the largest measure that the erudite civilization of classic antiquity could afford, that finished mental training which was precisely what Paulus, however accomplished in all athletic exercises, rather lacked. Both the

youths easily saw that something was to come; they both felt that a secret was on the leap.

"Break a horse!" exclaimed the slave Claudius, with parched, white lips; "I am a poor lad who have always been at the desk! What do I know of horses or of riding?"

There was an inclination to titter among the clerks, but it was checked by their good-nature—indeed, by their liking for Claudius; they all looked up, however.

"Your illustrious master," replied the magister, or steward, or major-domo, "has thought of this, and, indeed, of everything;" again the man directed the same shamefaced glance as before toward Dion. "Knowing, probably, your unexpertness in horses, which is no secret among your fellow-slaves, and, in truth, among all your acquaintances, Tiberius Cæsar has, in the first place, selected for you the very animal, out of all his stables, which you are to ride at the games in the circus before the couple of hundred thousand people who will crowd the campaign."

"At the games!" interrupted Claudius, "and in the circus! Why, all who know me know that I am an arrant coward."

Like a burst of bells, peal upon peal, irrepressible, joyous, defiant, and frank, as if ringing with astonishment and scorn at the thing, yet also full of friendliness and honest, pitying love for the person, broke forth the laugh of Paulus. It was so genuine and so infectious, that even Dion smiled in a critical, musing way, while all the slaves chuckled audibly, and the slave chained to the staple near the door rattled his brass fastenings at his sides. Only three individuals preserved their gravity:

the shamefaced steward, poor little frightened Benigna, and the astonished Claudius himself.

"In the second place," pursued the magister or steward, "besides choosing for you the very animal, the individual and particular horse, which you are to ride, the Cæsar has considerably determined and decided, in view of your deserved popularity among all your acquaintances, that, if any acquaintance of yours, any of your numerous friends, any other person, in fine, whoever, in your stead shall volunteer to break this horse for Tiberius Cæsar, you shall receive your freedom and the fifty thousand sesterces the very next morning, exactly the same."

A rather weak and vague murmur of applause from the slaves followed this official statement.

"And so the Cæsar," said Claudius, "has both selected me the steed, and has allowed me a substitute to break him, if I can find any substitute. Suppose, however, that I decline such conditions of liberty altogether—what then?"

"Then Tiberius Cæsar sells you to-morrow morning to Vedius Pollio of Pompeii, who has come hither on purpose to buy you, and carry you home to his Cumæan villa."

"To his tank, you mean," replied poor Claudius, "in order that I may fatten his lampreys. I am in a pretty species of predicament. But name the horse which I am to break at the games."

Dion turned his head slightly toward the steward, who was about to answer, and the steward remained silent. A sort of excitement shot through the apartment.

"Name the horse, if you please, honored magister,"

said Claudius. Even now the steward could not, or did not, speak.

Before the painful pause was broken, the attention of all present was arrested by a sudden uproar in the street. The noise of a furious trampling, combined with successive shrieks, whether of pain or terror, was borne into the palace.

Dionysius, followed by Paulus, by Claudius, by the steward, and Benigna, ran to the window, if such it can be termed, drew aside the silken curtain, and pushed open the gaudily-painted, perforated shutter, when a strange and alarming spectacle was presented in the open space formed by cross-streets before the left front of the mansion.

A magnificent horse, of bigger stature, yet of more elegant proportions, than the horses which were then used for the Roman cavalry, was in the act of rearing; and within stroke of his fore-feet, on coming down, lay a man, face under, motionless, a woollen tunic ripped open behind at the shoulder, and disclosing some sort of wound, from which blood was flowing. The horse, which was of a bright roan color, was neither ridden nor saddled, but girt with a cloth round the belly, and led, or rather held back, by two long cavassons, which a couple of powerfully-built, swarthy men, dressed like slaves, held at the further ends on opposite sides of the beast, considerably apart, and perhaps thirty feet behind him. One of these lines or reins—that nearest the palace—was taut, the other was slack; and the slave who held the former had rolled it twice or thrice round his bare arm, and was leaning back, and hauling, hand over hand.

The animal had apparently stricken on the back, un-awares, with a fore-foot play and a pawing blow, the man who was lying so still and motionless on the pavement, and the beast, having reared, was now trying to come down upon his victim. But no sooner were his fore-legs in the air than he, of course, thereby yielded a sudden purchase to the groom who was pulling him with the taut cavasson, and this man was thus at last enabled to drag him fairly off his hind-legs, and to bring him with a hollow thump to the ground upon his side. Before the brute could again struggle to his feet, four or five soldiers, who happened to be nigh, running to the rescue, had lifted, and carried out of harm's way, the prostrate and wounded man.

"That is the very horse!" exclaimed the magister, stretching his neck between the shoulders of Dion and Paulus, at the small window of the palace.

"I observe," said Paulus, "that the cavasson is ringed to a muzzle—the beast is indisputably muzzled."

"Why is he muzzled?"

"Because," replied the magister, "he eats people!"

"Eats people!" echoed Paulus, in surprise.

"O gods!" cried Benigna.

"Yes," quoth the steward; "the horse is priceless; he comes of an inestimable breed; that is the present representative of the Sejan race of steeds. Your Tauric horses are cats in comparison; your cavalry horses but goats. That animal is directly descended from the real horse Sejanus, and excels, they even say, his sire, and indeed he also in his turn goes now by the old name. He is the horse Sejanus."

At these words Paulus could not, though he tried

hard, help casting one glance toward Benigna, who had been with him only so short a time before at the top of the palace, listening to the conversation of the tipsy patricians. The poor little girl had become very white and very scare-faced.

"Tell us more," said Dionysius, "of this matter, worthy magister. We have all heard that phrase of ill-omen—'such and such a person has the horse Sejanus'—meaning that he is unlucky, that he is doomed to destruction. Now, what is the origin and what is the true value of this popular proverb?"

"Like all popular proverbs," replied the steward, with a bow of the deepest reverence to the young Athenian philosopher, "it has some value, my lord, and a real foundation, although Tiberius has determined to confute it by practical proof. You must know, most illustrious senator of Athens, that during the civil wars which preceded the summer-day stillness of this glorious reign of Augustus, no one ever appeared in battlefield or festive show so splendidly mounted as the knight Cneius Sejus, whose name has attached itself to the race.

"His horse, which was of enormous proportions, like the beast you have just beheld, would try to throw you first and would try to eat you afterward. Few could ride him: and then his plan was simple. Those whom he threw he would beat to death with his paws, and then tear them to pieces with his teeth. Moreover, if he could not dislodge his rider by honest plunging and fair play, he would writhe his neck round like a serpent—indeed, the square front, large eyes, and supple neck remind one of a serpent; he would twist his head back, I say, all white and dazzling, with the

ears laid close, the lips drawn away, and the glitter of his teeth displayed, and, seizing the knee-cap or the shinbone, would tear it off, and bring down the best horseman that ever bestrode a Bucephalus. What usually followed was frightful to behold; for, once a rider was dismounted, the shoulder has been seen to come away between the brute's teeth, with knots and tresses of tendons dripping blood like tendrils, and the ferocious horse has been known with his great flat grinders to crush the skull of the fallen person, and lap up the brains—as you would crack a nut—after which, he paws the prostrate figure till it no longer resembles the form of man. But the present horse Sejanus, which you have just beheld, excels all in strength, beauty, and ferocity; he belongs to my master Tiberius.”

“Ah gods!” exclaimed poor Benigna; “this is the description of a demon rather than of a beast.”

Dionysius and Paulus exchanged one significant glance, and the former said:

“What became of the first possessor, who yields his name to so unexampled a breed of horses? what became of the knight Sejus?”

“A whisper had transpired, illustrious sir,” replied the steward, “that this unhappy man had fed the brute upon human flesh. Mark Antony, who coveted possession of the horse, brought some accusation, but not this, against the knight, who was eventually put to death; but Dolabella, the former lieutenant of Julius Cæsar, had just before given a hundred thousand sesterces (\$4,000) to Sejus for the animal; therefore Antony killed the knight for nothing, and failed to get Sejanus; at least he failed that time. Dolabella, however, did not

prosper; he almost immediately afterward murdered himself. Cassius thereupon became the next master of the Sejan horse, and Cassius rode him at the fatal battle of Philippi, losing which, Cassius, in his turn, after that resolute fashion of which we all have heard, put an end to his own existence."

"To one form of it," observed Dionysius.

"This time," continued the magister, bowing, "Mark Antony had his way—he became at last the lord of the Sejan horse, but likewise he, in his turn, was doomed to exemplify the brute's ominous reputation; for Antony, as you know, killed himself a little subsequently at Alexandria. The horse had four proprietors in a very short period, and in immediate succession, the first of whom was cruelly slain, and the three others slew themselves. Hence, noble sir, the proverb."

By this time, the magister had told his tale, the street outside had become empty and silent, and the parties within the chamber had thoroughly mastered and understood the horrible truth which underlay the case of the slave Claudius, and this new instance of Tiberius's wrath and vengeance.

The magister, Claudius, and Benigna had returned to the other end of the room, where the slaves were writing, and had left Paulus and Dion still standing thoughtfully near the window.

Claudius exclaimed, "My turn it is at present; it will be some one else's soon!"

He and Benigna were now whispering together. The magister stood a little apart, looking on the ground in a deep reverie, his chin buried in the hollow of his right hand, the arm of which was folded across

his chest. The slaves were bending over their work in silence.

Says Paulus in a low voice to Dion: "You have high credit with the emperor, illustrious Athenian; and surely if you were to tell him the whole case, he would interfere to check the cruelty of this man, this Tiberius."

"What, Augustus do this for a slave?" replied Dion mournfully. "The emperor would not, and by the laws could not, interfere with Vedius Pollio, or any private knight, in the treatment or government of his slaves, who are deemed to be the absolute property of their respective lords; what chance, then, that he should meddle, or, if he meddled, that he should successfully meddle, with Tiberius Cæsar on behalf of an offending slave? And this, too, for the sake, remember, of a low-born girl? Women are accounted void of deathless souls, my friend, even by some who suspect that men may be immortal. By astuteness, by beauty, not beautifully employed, and, above all, by the effect of habit, imperceptible as a plant in its growth, stealthy as the prehensile ivy, some few individual women, like Livia, Tiberius's mother, and Julia, Augustus's daughter, have acquired great accidental power. But to lay down the principle that the slightest trouble should be taken for these slaves, would in this Roman world raise a symphony of derision as musical as the cry of the Thessalian hounds when their game is afoot."

Paulus, buried in thought, stole a look full of pity toward the further end of the apartment. "Slaves, women, laws, gladiators," he muttered, "and brute power prevalent as a god. Every day, noble Athenian, I learn something which fills me with hatred and scorn

for the system amid which we are living." He then told Dion the story of Thellus and Alba; he next laid before him the exact circumstances of Benigna and Claudius; relating what had occurred that very morning, and by no means omitting the strange and wonderfraught conversation at the door of the palace, after which he added:

"I declare to you solemnly—but then I am no more than an uninstructed youth, having neither your natural gifts nor your acquired knowledge—I never heard anything more enchanting, more exalted, more consoling, and, to my poor mind, more reasonable, or more probable, than that some god is quickly to come down from heaven and reform and control this abominable world. Why do I say probable? Because it would be godlike to do it. I would ask nothing better, therefore, than to be allowed to join you and go with you all over the world; searching and well weighing whatever evidences and signs may be accessible to man's righteously discontented and justly wrathful industry in such a task; and I would be in your company when you explored and decided whether this sublime dream, this noble, generous, compensating hope, this grand and surely divine tradition, be a truth, or, ah me! ah me! nothing but a vain poem of the future—a beautiful promise never to be realized, the specious mockery of some cruel muse."

Dion's blue eyes kindled and burned, but he remained silent.

"In the meantime, listen further," added Paulus. "What would the divine being who is thus expected, were he in this room, deem of this transaction before our eyes? You have heard the steward's account of

the horse Sejanus; you have heard Claudius's allusion to Vedius Pollio's lampreys. Now, you are a wise, witty, and eloquent person, and you can correct me if I say wrong—in what is the man whom the horse Sejanus, for instance, throws and tears to pieces better than the horse? In what is the man whom the lampreys devour better than the lampreys? I say the horse and the lampreys are better than the man, if mere power be a thing more to be esteemed and honored than what is right, and just, and honorable, and estimable; for the lampreys and the horse possess the greater might, most indubitably, in the cases mentioned. The elephant is stronger than we, the hound is swifter, the raven lives much longer. Either the mere power to do a thing deserves my esteem more than any other object or consideration, and therefore, whoever can trample down his fellow-men, and gratify all his brutal instincts at the expense of their lives, their safety, their happiness, their reasonable free-will, is more estimable than he who is just, truthful, kind, generous, and noble—either, I say, the man who is strong against his fellows is more good than he who is good—and the words justice, right, gentleness, humanity, honor, keeping faith in promises, pity for poor little women who are oppressed and brutally used, virtue, and such noises made by my tongue against my palate, express nothing which can be understood, nothing in which any mind can find any meaning—either, I again say, the lampreys and the Sejan horse are more to be esteemed, and valued, and loved than my sister or my mother, or it is not true that the mere power of Tiberius, combined with the brutish inclination to do a thing, terminates the question whether

it is right to do it. The moment I like to do anything, if I can do it, is it necessarily right that I should do it? The moment two persons have a difference, is it right for either of them, and equally right for each of them, to murder the other? But if it was the intention of this great being, this god who is expected to appear immediately among us, that we should be dependent upon each other, each doing for the other what the other cannot do for himself—and I am sure of it—then it will please him, Dion, if I consider what is helpful and just and generous. Or am I wrong? Is virtue a dream? Are contrary things in the same cases equally good? Are contrary things in the same cases equally beautiful?

“Are my brutish instincts or inclinations, which vary as things vary round me, my only law? Is each of us intended by this great being to be at war with all the rest? to regard the positive power each of us may have as our sole restriction? to destroy and injure all the others by whom we could be served, if we would for our parts also serve and help? And must women, for instance, being the weaker, be brutally used? Tell me, Dion, will it please this great being if I try to render service to my fellow-men, who must have the same natural claims to his consideration as I have? or does he wish me to hurt them and them to hurt me, according as we may each have the power? Is there nothing higher in a man than his external power of action? Answer—you are a philosopher.”

The countenance of Dion blazed for one instant, as if the light of a passing torch had been shed upon a mirror, and then resumed the less vivid effulgence of

that permanent intellectual beauty which was its ordinary characteristic. He replied:

"All the philosophy that ever was taught or thought could not lead you to truer conclusions."

"Then," returned Paulus, "come back with me to the other end of the room."

"Benigna," said Paulus, "your kindness to my sister and mother, and your natural probity, had something, I think, to do with beginning this trouble in which you and your intended find yourselves. As you were not unmindful of us, it is but right that we should not be unmindful of you. Tiberius permits any friend of Claudius the slave to be a substitute in breaking the horse Sejanus; and Claudius is to have his freedom and fifty thousand sesterces, and to marry you, whom I see to be a good, honorable-hearted girl, all the same as if he had complied with the terms in person. This was thoughtful, and, I suppose, generous of Tiberius Cæsar."

"Would any of these youths who hear me," added he, turning round, "like to break the fine-looking steed at the games, before all the people, instead of Claudius?"

No one replied.

"It will be a distinguished act," persisted he.

Dead silence still.

"Then I will do it myself," he said. "Magister, make a formal note of the matter in your tablets; and be so good as to inform the Cæsar of it, in order that I, on my side, may learn place and time."

The magister, with a low bow and a face expressing the most generous and boundless astonishment, grasped his prettily-mounted stylus, and, taking the pugillares

from his girdle, drew a long breath, and requested Paulus to favor him with his name and address.

"I am," replied he, "the Knight Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, son of one of the victors at Philippi, nephew of the ex-triumvir. I reside at Crispus's inn, and am at present a promised prisoner of Velleius Paterculus, the military tribune."

While the steward wrote in his tablet, Benigna uttered one or two little gasps and fairly fainted away. The slave Claudius saved her from falling, and he now placed her on a bench against the wall.

Paulus, intimating that he would like to return to Crispus's hostelry before dark, and having learnt, in reply to a question, that Claudius could procure from Thellus, the gladiator, a vehicle for Benigna, and that he would request Thellus himself to convey her home, turned to take leave of Dion.

The Athenian, however, said he would show him the way out of the palace. They went silent and thoughtful. In the impluvium they found a little crowd surrounding Augustus, who had returned from his promenade to the camp, and who was throwing crumbs of bread among some pigeons near the central fountain.

Two ladies were of the company, one of whom, in advanced age, was evidently the Empress Livia, but for whose influence and management Germanicus—certainly not her ungrateful son Tiberius—would have been the next master of the world. The other lady, who was past her prime, had still abundant vestiges of a beauty which must once have been very remarkable.

She was painted red and plastered white, with im-

mense care, to look some fifteen years younger than she truly was.

Her countenance betrayed to a good physiognomist, at first glance, the horrible life she had led. Paulus, whose experience was little, and although she fastened upon him a flaming glance, which she intended to be full both of condescension and fascination, thought that he had seldom seen a woman either more repulsive or more insanely haughty.

It was Julia, the new and abhorred wife of Tiberius. Not long before, at the request of Augustus, who was always planning to dispose of Julia, Tiberius had given up for her the only woman he ever loved, Agrippina Marcella.

Tiberius so loved her, if it deserves to be termed love, that when, being thus deserted, she took another husband (Asinius Gailus), he, mad with jealousy, threw him into a dungeon and kept him there till he died, as Suetonius and Tacitus record.

“Ah, my Athenian!” said the emperor to Dionysius, placing a hand affectionately on the youth’s shoulder, “could you satisfy me that those splendid theories of yours are more than dreams and fancies; that really there is one eternal, all-wise, and omnipotent spirit, who made this universal frame of things, and governs it as an absolute monarch; that he made us; that in us he made a spirit, a soul, a ghost, a thinking principle, which will never die; and that I, who am going down to the tomb, am only to change my mode of existence; that I shall not wholly descend thither; that an urn will not contain everything which will remain of me; and all this in a very different sense from that which

poor Horace meant. But why speak of it? Has not Plato failed?"

"Plato," replied Dionysius, "neither quite failed nor is quite understood, illustrious emperor. But you were saying, if I could satisfy you. Be pleased to finish. Grant I could satisfy you; what then?"

"Satisfy me that one eternal sovereign of the universe lives, and that what now thinks in me," returned the emperor, while the courtly group made a circle, "will never cease to think; that what is now conscious within me will be conscious for ever; that now, in more than a mere poetical allusion to my fame—and on the word of Augustus Cæsar, there is no reasonable request within the entire reach and compass of my power which I will refuse you."

"And what sort of a hearing, emperor," inquired Dion, "and under what circumstances, and upon what conditions, will you be pleased to give me? and when? and where?"

"In this palace, before the games end," replied Augustus. "The hearing shall form an evening's entertainment for our whole circle and attendance. You shall sustain your doctrines, while our celebrated advocates and orators, Antistius Labio and Domitius Afer, who disagree with them, I know, shall oppose you. Let me see. The Cæsars, Tiberius and Germanicus, with their ladies, and our host Mamurra and his family, and all our circle, shall be present. Titus Livy, Lucius Varius, Velleius Paterculus, and the greatest orator Rome ever produced, except Cicero" (the old man mentioned with watery eyes the incomparable genius to whose murder he had consented in his youth)—"I

mean Quintus Haterius—shall form a judicial jury. Haterius shall pronounce the sentence. Dare you face such an ordeal?”

“I will accept it,” replied the Athenian, blushing; “I will accept the ordeal with fear. Daring is contrasted with trembling; but, although my daring trembles, yet my trepidation dares.”

“Oh! how enchanting!” cried the august Julia; “we shall hear the eloquent Athenian.” And she clasped her hands and sent an unutterable glance toward Dion, who saw it not.

“It will be very interesting indeed,” added the aged empress.

“Better for once than even the mighty comedy of the palace,” said Lucius Varius.

“Better than the gladiators,” added Velleius Paterculus.

“An idea worthy of the time of Virgil and Mæcenas,” said Titus Livy.

“Worthy of Augustus’s time,” subjoined Tiberius, who was leaning against one of the pillars which supported the gallery of the impluvium.

“Worthy of his dotage,” muttered Cneius Piso to Tiberius, with a scowl.

“Worthy,” said a handsome man, with wavy, crisp, brown locks, in the early prime of life, whose military tunic was crossed with the broad purple stripe, “worthy of Athens in the days of Plato; and as Demosthenes addressed the people after listening to the reporter of Socrates, so Haterius shall tell this company what he thinks, after listening to Dion.”

“Haterius is getting old,” said Haterius.

"You may live," said Augustus, "to be a hundred, but you will never be old; just as our Cneius Piso here never was young."

There was a laugh. The Haterius in question was he to whom Ben Jonson compared Shakespeare as a talker, and of whom, then past eighty, Augustus used, Seneca tells us, to say that his careering thoughts resembled a chariot whose rapidity threatened to set its own wheels on fire, and that he required to be held by a drag—"sufflaminandus."

Dion now bowed and was moving away, followed modestly by Paulus, who desired to draw no attention to himself, when the steward, or magister, glided quickly up the colonnade of the impluvium to the pillar against which Tiberius was leaning, whispered something, handed his tablets to the Cæsar, and, in answer to a glance of surprised inquiry, looked toward and indicated Paulus.

Tiberius immediately passed Paulus and Dion, saying in an undertone, "Follow me," and led the way into a small empty chamber, of which, when the two youths had entered it, he closed the door.

"You are going to break the horse called Sejanus?" said he, turning round and standing.

Paulus assented.

"Then you must do so on the fourth day from this, in the review-ground of the camp, an hour before sunset."

Paulus bowed.

"Have you anything to inquire, to request, or to observe?" pursued Tiberius.

"Am I to ride the horse muzzled, sir?" asked the youth.

"The muzzle will be snatched off by a contrivance of the cavasson, after you mount him," replied Tiberius, looking steadfastly at the other.

"Then, instead of a whip, may I carry any instrument I please in my hands?" demanded Paulus; "my sword, for example?"

"Yes," answered Tiberius; "but you must not injure the horse; he is of matchless price."

"But," persisted Paulus, "your justice, illustrious Cæsar, will make a distinction between any injury which the steed may do to himself and any which I may do to him. For instance, he might dash himself against some obstruction, or into the river Liris, and in trying to clamber out again might be harmed. Such injuries would be inflicted by himself, not by me. The hurt I shall do him either by spear, or by sword, or by any other instrument, will not be intended to touch his life or his health, nor likely to do so. If I do make any scars, I *think* the hair will grow again."

"He will not be so scrupulous on his side," said Tiberius; "however, your distinction is reasonable. Have you anything else to ask?"

"Certainly I have," said Paulus; "it is that no one shall give him any food or drink, except what I myself shall bring, for twenty-four hours before I ride him."

Tiberius uttered a disagreeable laugh.

"Am I to let you starve Sejanus?" he asked.

"That is not my meaning, sir," answered Paulus quietly. "I will give him as much corn and water as he will take. I wish to prevent him from having any other kind of provender. There are articles which will make a horse drunk or mad."

"I agree," replied Tiberius, "that he shall have only corn and water, provided he have as much of both as my own servant wishes; nor have I any objection that the servant should receive these articles from you alone, or from your groom."

Paulus inclined his head and kept silence.

"Nothing more to stipulate, I perceive," observed Tiberius.

The youth admitted that he had not; and, seeing the Cæsar move, he opened the door, held it open while the great man passed through, and then, taking a friendly leave of Dion, hastily quitted the palace.

Tiberius, meeting Sejanus, took him aside and said:

"We have got rid of the brother! You must have everything ready to convey her to Rome the fifth day from this. And now, enough of private matters. I am sick of them. The affairs of the empire await me!"





PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE die was cast, and Paulus went away plighted to an undertaking which appeared sufficiently arduous, and some of the chances of which were even full of horror.

The news of the arrangement spread through the palace of the Mamurras before he had well quitted Formiæ. From the palace it circulated through the town, from the town it reached the camp the same evening; the next day the surrounding country knew it. Carrier-pigeons* had borne to Rome a hint of the gayeties, the interest, and the splendor which the simultaneous occurrence of the emperor's visit, and the collection of an army for real fighting purposes (in fact, to repel the German invasion), were likely to call forth in the old Latian town; and now the same aerial messengers apprised many a sated circus-goer in the capital that a very pretty novelty indeed would be added to the contests of gladiators and the battles of wild beasts.

* It was some fifty years before, at the siege of Modena, that the first recorded instance, so far as I am aware, occurred of making the pigeon a letter-carrier.

The concourse pouring into and converging from all parts toward Formiæ, which had already been so extensive, increased, therefore, into an enormous concentric movement. Nothing can better show what a prodigious multitude was thus accidentally collected than the fact that, even at Rome (which then contained four millions of inhabitants), a diminution of pressure was perceptible, for the time, to those who remained. This change resembled what Londoners experience on the Derby day.

Paulus, that evening, having passed a considerable time with his mother and sister (to whom he communicated the fact of his engagement without alarming them by explaining its peculiar horrors), felt little inclined to sleep. When, therefore, the lanista Thellus, who had, as Claudius said he would invite him to do, brought back Benigna to Crispus's inn, was taking his leave of the Lady Aglais and of Agatha, Paulus said to him :

"Do not go soon ; but come down into the garden and let us take a stroll. We may not often be able to converse with each other hereafter."

"Gladly, my valiant youth," said Thellus ; and they descended together.

A beautiful starry and moonlit night looked down over Italy, as they sauntered in the fragrant garden, conversing a little and then relapsing into thoughtful silence.

Presently Thellus said :

"This adventure of yours makes me unhappy."

"Well," returned Paulus, "my mother and sister have such need of my protection that I feel no levity about it myself. I confess that it is a grave business."

They now walked up and down the laurel alley a few turns, absorbed in thought.

Suddenly two men approached them along two different gravel-walks in the garden, one dressed as a slave, the other in the uniform of a decurion, a legionary officer, slightly more important than a modern sergeant of the line in the English army.

The slave had one of the worst countenances, and the decurion one of the most honest, that Paulus in his very limited or Thellus in his immense experience had ever beheld. Paulus recognized the slave at once; it was that Lygdus who had endeavored to bring him to the ground by a side-sweep of Cneius Piso's sword, which this man, as the reader will remember, was carrying at the time.

The decurion gave Paulus a letter, directed in the same handwriting, folded in the same style, and its silk thread sealed with the same device of a frog, as a certain communication which he had once before received.

The moon shone high, and so calm was the night that it proved easy to read the bold characters.

They ran thus:

"Velleius Paterculus, military tribune, salutes Paulus Lepidus Æmilius. Renounce this absurd engagement, which cannot concern you. It is yet possible, but will be too late to-morrow, to plead ignorance of what you were undertaking. Leave wretched slaves to their fate! —VALE."

Paulus, after reading this note, begged the decurion to wait, and, turning to Lygdus, asked his business.

The slave stated his name, and said he was appointed to receive, dating from the day after next, the proven-

der which he understood Paulus to be desirous of furnishing for the use of the Sejan horse.

"Has Tiberius Cæsar appointed you?"

"Sir, yes."

"Of course, then, you are used to horses?"

"Sir, I have always belonged to the stable," said Lygdus.

"But," pursued Paulus, "am I then forbidden to enter the stable myself, and make acquaintance with the horse I have to break?"

"Sir, I have orders," answered this Lygdus—who, as I think I have already mentioned, was destined, as the instrument of Cneius Piso and Plancina, some few years later, to be the cruel assassin of Germanicus—"I have orders always to admit you, and always to watch you."

"*You* to watch a Roman knight!"

"For that matter, most honored sir," answered Lygdus, "the rank of the person watched does not alter the eyes of the watcher. I could watch a Roman senator, or even a Roman Cæsar, if necessary."

"I will be security you could," said Thellus, whose great and almost diaphanous nostrils quivered as he spoke.

Lygdus, by way of answer, withdrew a pace.

The decurion, meanwhile, had taken off his helmet, and the starry heavens were not more clear than his indignant, simple countenance.

"It is well," said Paulus. "I will ask for you at Formiæ. Go now."

Lygdus therefore went away.

"Decurion," said Paulus, "say to the esteemed Vel-

leius Paterculus that I am very grateful to him ; but what must be, must be."

"And what is *that*, noble sir ?" answered the decurion, "in case my commanding officer should ask me for an explanation ?"

"That I have given my word advertently, and will keep it faithfully," replied Paulus.

"Is this, noble sir," said the decurion, "what you mean by *that which must be* ?"

"Have I, then," answered Paulus, "said anything obscure or confused ?"

"Only something unusual, excellent sir," said the decurion ; "but not anything confused or obscure. Permit me to add, that the whole camp knows the circumstances of this miserable undertaking, and wishes you well ; and I feel in my single bosom the good wishes of the whole camp for your success."

"What is your name, brave decurion ?"

"Longinus."

"Well," replied Paulus, "if I survive the struggle with this creature, I mean to join the expedition of Germanicus Cæsar, and I will have my eye upon you. I should like to be your informant that you were promoted to a higher rank, and to call you the Centurion Longinus."

Tears were standing in the Roman decurion's eyes as he bowed to take leave.

Thellus and Paulus, being now left again alone, resumed their walk up and down the laurel alley.

"I am not so conversant with horses," observed Thellus, "as I could for your sake at present wish to be. But all animals, I notice, are more quiet when blinded."

At this moment the branches of a cross-walk rustled, and a stately figure in the Greek mantle (*χλαίνα*) approached them.

"Are you not Æmilius, the nephew of the triumvir?" asked the stranger.

"Yes," replied Paulus.

"Who is this," continued the newcomer, looking at Thellus. "I have something to say which may concern your safety."

"You may trust this brave man," said Paulus, "it is my friend Thellus."

"Well," pursued the other, in a very low tone, "take this little pot of ointment; and two hours before you have to ride the Sejan horse, go into his stable, make friends with him, and rub his nostrils with the contents. He will be then muzzled, you know. You will find him afterward docile."

"Whom have I to thank for so much interest in me?" demanded Paulus.

"My name is Charicles," replied the stranger hesitatingly, and still speaking almost in a whisper; "and I have the honor of numbering Dionysius of Athens among the best of my friends."

"My mother," returned Paulus, "would, I think, be glad to see you some day soon."

"I shall feel it an honor; but pray excuse me to her to-night," said Charicles. "Tiberius Cæsar knows nothing of my absence, and I had better return at once to Formiæ. I will visit you again."

"But would this ointment injure the horse?" inquired Paulus.

"Not by any means," said Charicles; "it comes

from a distant eastern land. It will merely make him sleepy. I have been more than an hour and a half handling the ingredients, and I can hardly keep awake myself. Forgive my hurry—farewell.” And the stately Greek made an obeisance as he disappeared.

Paulus remained, holding the pot, which consisted of some kind of porcelain, in his hand, and looking at it, when Thellus exclaimed,

“Why, this laurel hedge is alive!”

In a moment he had sprung through it and returned, dragging in his mighty grasp Lygdus the slave.

“Not yet departed?” said Thellus.

“Sir, I was asleep,” replied the slave, with a look of terror.

“I have but to tighten my fingers,” cried Thellus, “and you will sleep so as not to wake in a hurry.”

“Thellus,” observed Paulus, “I am not depending either on this man’s knowledge or on this man’s ignorance. I have quite other hopes and other grounds of confidence. Let him go.”

“Ah!” said Thellus, “I would like to have the chastising of you. But go, as this noble gentleman desires; go, then, as the young Roman knight bids you!”

He shook the reptile-headed, down-looking, and side-looking slave away, and the latter disappeared.

“O friend and noble sir!” said Thellus, “it nearly breaks my heart to see you thus bound hand and foot, and doomed to destruction.”

“Have a good heart, dear Thellus,” said Paulus.

So they parted, the gladiator returning to his vehicle, and Paulus retiring to his room, where, as he lay on his

bed and listened to the splash of the fountain in the impluvium, he silently and calmly offered back to the great unknown God whom Dionysius worshiped, the life which he, that unknown Deity, could alone have given.



CHAPTER II.



EXT morning, before the family were out of their beds, Phylis the slave had returned from Monte Circello with the following note:

“ Marcus Lepidus Æmilius hails the widow of his brave and valiant brother. Come with your children. The last of mine has, alas! died under the clemency of one man, and the liberality of another. The clement man is Augustus, the liberal man was Mæcenas. All that I now retain is yours; and yours shall be all I may be able to leave. Farewell.”

But despite of this note, Paulus could not persuade his mother to depart from that neighborhood till after the trifling display of horsemanship, as he called it, which he had to afford for the amusement of the Roman world on the evening of the third day ensuing. A little ruffled at his failure to persuade the Lady Aglais to go away, he summoned their freedman Philip, and with him for a companion started on foot for Formiæ before noon, along a road as thronged at that moment and as animated as the road to Epsom is the eve of what Lord Palmerston has rather affectedly, and, as applied to an annual event, very incorrectly, called the Isthmian games of England.

Scarcely had he and Philip entered the southern gate when they noticed a little crowd around some nurses, one of whom, apparently a Nubian, held the hand of a magnificently attired child of any age between five and eight. At his side was an eastern-looking youth of

about eighteen, whom the reader has met before. Thellus, the gladiator, was standing with folded arms on the outskirts of the suddenly collected concourse. The child had dropped some toy, which a dog had seized in his mouth, and had thereby defaced. The dog was now a prisoner, held fast by the throat in a slave's hands.

"The poor dog knew not what he was doing," said the nurse.

"I care nothing for that," cried the child, who was purple with passion. "Strangle him, Lygdus."

And accordingly Lygdus tightened his grasp of the dog's throat till the animal's tongue was thrust forth; the grasp was yet longer maintained, and the dog was throttled dead.

"Is it dead?" screamed the child.

"Quite; see," replied Lygdus, casting away upon the street the breathless carcass.

"Ah! beautiful!" cried the child; "now come away."

"Nice and neat as an execution," said a powerfully built, dusky, middle-aged man, having a long, ruddy beard, streaked with gray, around whom were several slaves in Asiatic dress. This person, also, the reader has met before. "But," added he, "I am going up for my own trial, and I hope it will not be followed by another execution."

"I only hope it *will*," cried the interesting child. "What fun it would be to see a man strangled."

"Who is that infant monster, Thellus?" asked Paulus.

"He is the son of Germanicus and Agrippina; his name is Caius. You see, young as he is, he already

wears the *caligæ* of the common soldiers, among whom he continually lives. It is his delight. They nickname him Caligula.* Do you know, there are good chances he yet wears the purple and succeeds Augustus, or at least Augustus's next heir, as emperor of the world."

"Happy world will it be under his rule," said Paulus.

Suddenly there were cries of "Make way." Lictors moved, making large room among the crowd. Sejanus appeared in the robes of a prætor; and Paulus and his friend Thellus found themselves borne along, like leaves in a stream, toward the back of the Mamurran palace, in a large room on the ground-floor of which they presently beheld the big, dusky-colored man of fifty or thereabouts, with the long, ruddy, gray-streaked beard, standing before a sort of bar. Behind the bar, on a chair of state, like the curule chair of the senators, Augustus was sitting. A crowd of famous persons, many of whom we have already had occasion to mention, stood behind him, and on either hand Livy, Lucius Varius, Haterius, Domitius Afer, Antistius Labio, Germanicus and Tiberius Cæsar were there. In a row behind were Cneius Piso, Pontius Pilate, and the boy Herod Agrippa.

"And so," said Augustus, "you tell us you are the son of Herod the Great, as he is called; in other words, Herod the Idumæan; his son Alexander?"

"We have seen," said Paulus to Thellus, in a whisper, "the fate of a dog; we are now to learn that of a king, or a pretender to the dignity."

* I am aware of an apparent anachronism here of some four or five years, according to Dio, Tacitus, Suetonius, and others; but Caligula was, I think, a few years older than these authors represent; for Josephus furnishes a somewhat different calendar from theirs.

"Great and dread commander, such I am," answered the red-bearded, big, dark man.

"But," said Augustus, "the accredited rumor runs that Herod condemned his two sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, to death. Nay, I have the official report sent to me at the time by the prefect of Syria, and letters from Herod the Idumæan himself."

"Herod condemned them, but the executioner killed others instead," answered the Jew. "*They* escaped to Sidon."

"*Them and they!*" said Augustus; "you mean that others were executed instead of *them*?"

"Yes, my commander."

"Why do you not," pursued Augustus, "say *instead of us*?"

"I do not understand," replied the Jew.

"Are you not," asked Augustus, "one of them?"

"I am the son of Herod."

"You speak as though you had gone out of that person. You speak rather like a historian than like a sufferer and an actor. You are talking of yourself and your brother, yet you say *they*, not *we*!"

"Such is the style of the east, emperor."

"Pardon me," said Augustus; "I know the style of the east perfectly well. Solve me now another difficulty: I also well know Herod the Idumæan, many cases connected with whom were litigated before me and decided by me. Now, I never knew a man who, having determined that anybody was to die, took such methodical pains to carry that determination into effect. He dealt largely in executions; and if there was a person in the world, it was Herod, who saw with

his own eyes that his intended executions should be realities."

"Mine was not," said the Jew, and a laugh arose in court. "All the Jews in Sidon know that I am Alexander, son of Herod; all those in Crete know it; all those in Melas know it; and when I landed at Dicearchia all the Jews received me as their king; and you are not ignorant, great emperor, that thousands of my countrymen in Rome, the other day, carried me upon a royal litter through the streets, and clothed me in royal robes and ornaments, and received me, wherever I went, with shouts of welcome as Herod's son."

"And you have, then," replied Augustus, after a pause, "been nurtured as a royal person in the east?"

"Always," answered the Jew.

"I, myself," returned Augustus, "have seen and known the son Alexander, as well as his father Herod; and though you are not unlike the son, yet you—*show me your hands.*"

The Jew stretched forth his hands.

"Those hands have toiled from infancy. Uncover your neck and shoulders."

This was done.

Augustus immediately ordered the room to be cleared; and it was afterward known that he had extorted a confession of his imposture from this Alexander; and that, sparing his life, he condemned him to row one of the state galleys in chains for the rest of his days.

"Not much like dotage, all this," muttered Tiberius to Cneius Piso.

The eastern-looking youth, holding the hand of the child Caius Caligula, and followed by Pontius Pilate,

waited for Augustus in a passage—through which Paulus and Thellus were now trying to make their way into the street.

When the emperor came out, observing that the youth desired to speak with him, he stopped, saying: "What wish you, Herod Agrippa?"

"Emperor, I have told you that this man is not my uncle."

"And I," said Augustus, "have now settled the question. He is not."

"This officer behind me (Pilate is his name) has been very obliging to us ever since our arrival. I wish, my sovereign, you would send him to Judea as procurator."

"He is too young," replied Augustus; "but I will put his name in my tablets. Perhaps, under my successor, he may obtain the office."

"I want a favor," cried the child Caius.

"What is it, orator?" asked Augustus. (Caligula displayed as a child a precocious volubility of speech, which procured him the epithet by which he was now addressed.)

"That man, that black Jew—who pretended to be my friend's uncle—won't you put him to death?"

"*Externi sunt isti mores*," replied Augustus, quoting Cicero; "that would be quite a foreign proceeding. The anger that sheds unnecessary blood belongs to the levity of the Asiatics, or the truculence of barbarians."

Meanwhile Paulus and Thellus, who had unavoidably overheard these scraps of conversation, emerged now once more into the street, and Thellus guided Paulus to the stables of Tiberius Cæsar, where they found Lygdu

expecting the visit. He led them into a long range of buildings, and showed them, standing in a stall which had a door to itself, so contrived as to avoid the necessity of letting any other horses, when coming or going, pass him without some intervening protection, the famous Sejan steed. The walls were tapestried with leafy vine-boughs, and the stable seemed very cool, clean, and well kept.

The stature of the ominous horse, as we have had occasion already to mention, was unusually large; but the fineness of his form took away the idea of unwieldiness, and gave a guarantee of both power and speed. However, any person who had studied horses, and was learned in their points (which to a great extent merely means learned in their anatomy), would at a glance have condemned this one's head. It was, indeed, not lacking in physical elegance, although not lean enough; the forehead was very broad, but the eye was not sufficiently prominent nor mild in expression, and it shot forth a restless light; the muzzle and the ears, moreover, were coarse; the bones, from the eye down, were too concave, and the nostril appeared to be too thick. Something untrustworthy, and almost wicked, characterized the expression of the head altogether. The jaws were wide, and the neck was extraordinarily deep. The shoulders were not so flat or so thin as the Romans liked them to be; the girth round the heart was vast; the chest broad and full; the body barrel-shaped. The limbs were long (which, says Captain Nolan, "is weakness, not power"); but then the bones were everywhere well covered with muscle, the hind-legs being remarkably straight in the drop; in short, they promised an

immense stride when the animal should be urged to his fastest gallop.

"Now," said Paulus, after attentively examining these and a great many other points, which it would be too technical for us to detail, "I see he is not muzzled, but tied by the head, and I perceive a curious arrangement—that platform behind his manger, and raised somewhat higher than it. The object is to feed him thence, and approach him there, I suppose? Moreover, I observe you have pulleys in the roof and broad bands depending from them; do you, then, lift him off his legs when you groom him?"

Lygdus assented. Paulus, after looking attentively at the animal's hoofs, and forming an idea of the state of his feet, inquired:

"Is he savage to all alike, or can you, for instance, approach him?"

"Sir, I always take my precautions," answered the slave.

Paulus went round, and stood some ten minutes in front of the horse on the raised platform behind the manger, then shook a double handful of corn down before him and watched him eat it. Satisfied at length with this scrutiny, he now made arrangements for Philip to remain constantly in the stable, even sleeping there at night, and quitting it only to accompany the horse when taken out for exercise; and he made it clearly understood that Philip should superintend the feeding and grooming of the animal till he should be led forth for Paulus to ride him at the appointed time. We have said nothing to explain why the youth did not ride him muzzled, as often and as long as possible, during the

two days which were still left for preparation; the fact being that he proposed even now to do so, but found that, not having thought of stipulating for this as one of the conditions when he had his interview with Tiberius, orders had been given to Lygdus that no person whatever was to mount the horse till the hour when Paulus was to attempt his subjugation, in presence of the court, camp and people. Very much disappointed, and blaming his own want of foresight in not having extorted so important a right, Paulus now left the freedman "on duty" in the stables, Thellus volunteering to revisit him, and to bring plenty of provisions of all sorts, and thus to save the necessity of purveying for him from the distance of Crispus's inn. When our hero and the gladiator had retired, Philip began to make a couch of fresh and fragrant hay for himself on the platform behind the manger, muttering:

"But if I sleep it shall be with one eye open and the other not quite closed. If I find that scoundrel, for he looks a scoundrel, playing any tricks, I'll strangle him so surely as I have five fingers on each hand."

As Philip thus muttered, Lygdus drew nigh and addressed him.

"Your young master, I fear," he said, "has not long to live; no one can ride this horse."

"Three circumstances," replied Philip, seating himself deliberately on a roll of hay, "are unknown to you. I will tell you them. The first is, that this is not at all a case for mere horsemanship, although it is not to be denied that horsemanship is necessary. Courage and wit are more needful than any bodily adroitness in reminding brutes that their master is man. That is the

first circumstance. The second is, that my young master learned his riding among the Ætolians, who are not matched in the world."

"Take a sip of wine," said Lygdus, handing him a flask of hide.

"After you," said the wary old freedman.

Lygdus drank a little, wiped the mouth of the flask with a vine-leaf, and tendered it once more to Philip, saying:

"The first and second of your remarks seem to me to be appropriate, although I think the Gaulish riders equal to the Ætolians. I should like to hear the third circumstance."

Philip sipped some of the wine, gave back the vesse. to the slave, and proceeded:

"The third has relation to your phrase, 'I fear.' My master, Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, has been born and reared to fear death not over-much."

"*Edepol!*" cried Lygdus; "what is to be feared more?"

"Well," said Philip, "various things *he* fancies, and *I* fancy so too. Considering that all men must die, and can die only once, and that it has become somehow, I suppose, by practice and decree, as natural as to be born, and that we have been doing nothing for thousands of years but making way for each other in that manner, it would be an error to look upon death as the greatest evil. Why, man, I should go mad if that which none can avoid was the greatest evil that any can incur."

"*Edepol!*" exclaimed the slave again; "you are apparently right. Yet what can be conceived worse

than death? You mean immense pain, long continuing; in which case a wise man would put an end to himself."

"*Wise!*" returned Philip; "but it would be useless to reason with such as you. You should have heard, as I have heard him, Dionysius the Athenian upon this topic. When you make such reflections, is it your big toe, for example, or your belly, or your elbow, or any part of your body, that makes them? You may put an end to your body, and we know what becomes of it. When it is no longer fit, as the young Athenian says, to be the house of that which thinks and reflects within it, this last departs; for the body, once dead, ceases to think or reflect, and as soon as the *thinker* does thus depart, the body rots.

"But *that other thing* which kept the body from rotting, that other thing which thinks and reflects, and which is conscious that it is always the same, that it always has been itself—that *other thing* which knows its own unalterable identity through all the changes of the body, from squalling childhood to stiff-kneed age—how can that other thing, which may easily depart out of the body and leave it to perish, *depart out of itself?* A thing may leave another thing; but how can anything be left by itself? When this thing, says Dionysius, goes away from the body, the body always dies. It was, therefore, the body's life. But out of its own self this life cannot go (can anything go out of itself?); and if it goes out of the body unbidden, what will it say to him who had put it therein when he asks, Sentinel, why have you quitted your post? Servant, why have you left your charge? What brings you hither? I am

angry with you! What will this always conscious, always identical thing then reply?"

"You frighten me," said Lygdus. "What, then, can be more feared by a reasonable man than death?"

"My young master, for example," replied Philip, "so long, be it always understood, as he is not his own murderer, would prefer to die in honor than to live in shame. His father, the brave Roman tribune, used to say to him as a boy, that a disgraced life was worse than a useless life, and a useless life worse than a noble death. But who comes hither?"

The interesting little child Caius Caligula, and the boy Herod Agrippa, entered the stable as Philip spoke.

"Oh! there is the big wild horse," cried the sweet infant, who had only just arrived at the use of his reason; "but where is the young man that is to be eaten? I want to tell him what will become of him, and then to watch his face."

"He is, I see, even now coming back," said Philip sternly. He stood up as he spoke, and an instant afterward Paulus, who was attended by the slave Claudius, bearing a basket of provisions for old Philip, crossed the threshold.

"Ah!" said Caligula, "you are the person, are you not, who are to be first thrown off that horse, next to be danced upon by him, and finally to have your head crunched between his grinders, and that fine wavy hair of yours will not protect your head?"

"That is a graphic description," said Paulus; "but I trust it will not be realized."

"Are you not very frightened? Do you not feel very unhappy?"

Paulus seemed to experience some repugnance to converse with this child; but knowing him to belong to the imperial family, he answered with a calm smile :

“ Well, I do not feel the grinders yet.”

“ I will fix my eyes fast upon you,” returned the child, “ from the moment you mount.”

“ May they be blinded before they witness what they wish to behold ! ” muttered Philip.

During this short conversation, Lygdus noticed something white gleaming in a fold of Paulus’s tunic at the side, and picked it, unperceived by any one, out of the species of pocket where it lay. Caligula, after scrutinizing Paulus’s face, turned away, and ran rapidly up the stable, passing behind the horse.

He skipped and danced a few moments on the other side, gazing at the animal, and exclaiming, “ Good horse! fine horse! beautiful horse ! ”

Lygdus immediately called out to him not to come back till he had closed the door of the box, the leaf of which was on the hither side, and could be flung to, and the slave proceeded to do this. But Caligula, with a sort of skipping run, still uttering his exclamations and looking sideways into the stall as he passed, had already begun to return, giving Sejanus’s heels as wide an offing as the place allowed. A short, ferocious whinny, more like the cry of some wild beast than the neigh of a horse, was heard, and Sejanus lashed out his hind legs.

Caligula would probably have crossed, beyond range of harm, the line of this acknowledgment which the brute was making to him, in return for his ejaculatory compliments, only for the very precaution which Lygdus had taken, and which actually furnished the animal

with a projectile, and transmitted to a further distance, by means of the door-leaf, nearly the full force of the blow. As the door was swinging home, the powerful hoofs met it, and, shivering it from top to bottom, dashed it open again, and sent the outer edge of it and a large detached splinter against the middle of Caligula's forehead and face, from the hair down along the whole line of the nose; for, as we have remarked, his face happened to be turned sideways to receive the blow just when it was delivered. He fell insensible; but having been already in motion, the united effect of the two forces was to cast him beyond the reach of any further usage on the part of the Sejan steed. Lygdus immediately lifted him up, and he, with Herod Agrippa, carried Caligula into the open air. Paulus and Philip followed; but ascertaining that the injury was superficial, they returned to the stable, where they now were left alone.

"I heard him tell you, my master," said Philip to Paulus, "that he would fasten his eyes upon you, when you mounted yonder brute; now, he will not open those eyes for a week, and whatever happens to you, he is not going to see it. He is not seriously hurt; he'll be as well as ever in ten days; but for the present his beauty is spoilt, and he's as blind as the dead."

Paulus now in a low tone related to the freedman, whose services would be necessary in the matter, the visit of Charicles, and the gift to him by that learned man of an unguent which, if rubbed into the horse's nostrils, would render him sleepy, and, therefore, quiet. The old servant expressed great wonder and admiration at such a device, and Paulus felt with his hand for the

little porcelain pot where he remembered to have placed it. Needless to say, it was gone.

“Well,” said the youth, after a few questions and answers had been exchanged, “I must even take my chance without it. Charicles, I hear, has just been summoned to Rome, so that I cannot get any more of the compound. Farewell; I must now return to Crispus’s inn.”



CHAPTER III.

THE day when the singular struggle was to occur, the expectation of which had excited such curiosity, arose bright, breezeless, and sultry, and so continued till long past noon ; but the sun was now sinking toward the Tyrrhenian Sea, and a cool, soft air had begun to blow as the hour approached when the nephew of the triumvir was to mount the horse Sejanus, in the presence of such a multitude as the fields of Formiæ had never before beheld, whether in times of peace or times of war.

At the distance of a few miles on every side, the fair vales and slopes of Italy presented the appearance of a deserted land, over which no sound was heard save the drowsy hum of insects, the occasional sough of the rising breeze in the tops of the woods, and, predominant over all, far and near, the piercing ring of the cicala, with its musical rise and fall and its measured intervals. The fire of the wayside forge lay under its ashes ; all its anger taking rest, its hoarse roar asleep, till the breath of the bellows should once more awaken it to resistance and torment it into fury. All the labors of tillage were suspended ; the plough wearied no team of oxen ; little girls were watching the flocks and herds. Their fathers and mothers and brothers had all gone away since early morning, and would not return till nightfall. A lonely traveller from the south, whose horse had cast a shoe and fallen lame, had no alternative but to take off bridle and housings, leave them

under a tree in charge of a little damsel five or six years old, turn his steed loose in a soft field of clover, and continue his own journey on foot along the silent highway, amid the silent land.

The seats of the temporary amphitheatre were all filled; while within and beneath them, standing, but standing on three several elevations, contrived by means of planks (the rearmost being the highest), were six ranks of soldiers from the camp; the two inner ranks consisting exclusively of Ælius Sejanus's Prætorians. Immediately behind the centre of the amphitheatre, where Augustus with his court sat upon a strongly-built, lofty, and somewhat projecting wooden platform, canopied from the glare, a grove of tall and shady trees offered in their branches an accommodation of which the fullest advantage had been taken by a vast miscellaneous multitude, chiefly youths and boys; but among them soldiers who had received a holiday, and had found no room for themselves in the amphitheatre, were also numerous, their costumes rendering them easily distinguishable. On each side of the large canopied platform of the emperor and the Cæsars, with their court, were several seats of honor lined with purple and scarlet cloths, and connected with the platform by continuous pavilion roofs, but having their own benches. Here many ladies and some boys and girls sat. It is in one of these we are ourselves going to take post, invisible but watchful, unheard but hearing.

On the seat immediately in front of ours, and, of course, a little below it, is a group of three persons, attended by a slave. With these persons, and even with their slave, we have made more or less acquaint-

ance. One of them the doctors had forbidden to go forth; but he had come. He is a mere child; his pretty face is shockingly disfigured; both his eyes are closed and blacked; all the flesh round them is a discolored and contused mass, his head is bandaged, and every nerve in his countenance is twitching with the furious eagerness and curiosity of one whose organs of sight, if he could only see with them, would ravenously devour the spectacle which all the rest of that mighty multitude were to enjoy, and from which he alone was to be debarred. Amid the immense murmur of so many human voices, we have to listen with attention, in order to catch distinctly what the child says in his shrill treble tones.

“Now mark you, good Cneius Piso, and you, Herod Agrippa, I am as blind as a stone; and I have brought you here in no other character than as my eyes, my left and my right eye. If a single iota of what passes escapes me, may all the gods destroy you both, worse than any Roman or Jew was ever destroyed before! Has that beast of a horse (if it was mine, I’d tether it by all four legs to the ground, and make a squadron of cavalry back their horses against it, and kick it into shreds and little bits)—has that beast of a horse come forth yet?”

“Not yet, orator,” answered Piso. “I see that your father, the illustrious Germanicus, has not taken his place in the emperor’s pavilion; he is riding about yonder in the arena, and so is Tiberius Cæsar. I dare say they will prefer to remain on horseback; for they can thus see quite as well, while the scene continues to be enacted in this place, and if the Sejan horse should

break away through the opening in the amphitheatre opposite to us, they could follow and still assist at the issue, whereas we could not."

"But I *want* to see; I *must* see; I'll get on my pony too! Ah, my sight! I could not ride blind! O that accursed horse!"

"Then," said Piso, "do you wish the youth to conquer the horse, or the horse his rider?"

The child yelled, and struck his forehead furiously with his fists.

"Oh! If I could only see! I ought not to have come! It is worse to be here, knowing what is to happen, and having it all close under my eyes, and not to see it, than if I was far away and without the temptations around me. It is the hell of Tantalus; I cannot, *cannot* bear it."

After a pause of impotent rage, he asked Piso was the crowd of spectators very large?

"It is the largest I ever beheld," answered Piso; "it would be impossible to count it, or to guess the number."

"I wish every one present was stone blind at this very moment," said the dear child.

"Thanks, orator, on the part of all here present," answered Piso.

"Understand me—only for the moment," hastily returned Caligula; "I would give them their sight again when I recovered my own." A pause. "Or even when to-day's show was over, perhaps."

While yet he spoke, the hum and murmur, which had been incessant, died rapidly away.

"What is it?" asked Caligula.

"The Sejan horse is being led into the arena; two men, as usual, hold two cavassons on opposite sides. He is muzzled; two other grooms are now slackening the muzzle, in order to get the bit well back between his teeth by pulling up the reins which are under the muzzle, as the horse opens his mouth.

"They have the bit properly placed now, and have quitted his head. Oh! what a spring! It has jerked the further cavasson-holder clean off his feet. O gods! he has lost the cavasson, and the other man must be destroyed. No, bravo! the fellow has regained the loop of his rein or thong, and hauls the beast handsomely back."

"How can one man on either side," asked Caligula, "hold him? I have seen two on each side."

"I understand," replied Piso; but before he could finish his explanation or remark, or whatever it was designed to be, a sudden and impressive silence fell upon that vast assembly, and Piso stopped short.

"What has happened now?" whispered the child.

"The rider has come forth," answered Piso, "and is walking toward the horse from the direction of the open space in front of us. By Jupiter! a splendid youth; it is not to be denied."

"How is he dressed? Has he his whip and *stimuli* (spurs)? He will not need such helps, I surmise."

"He has no spurs, and he carries nothing in his hands. He wears that foreign-looking head-gear, the broad-rimmed petasus, as a shade, no doubt, against the level rays of the sunset; for I see he is giving directions to the grooms, and they are contriving to bring the horse round with his head toward the west. Ah! he thus faces

the opening ; I dare say he will try to push the animal into the excitement of a grand rush, and thus weary him at the outset. In that case, we shall not see much of the business ; he will be miles away over the country in a few minutes."

" You will find that such an injustice will not be allowed," answered the child. " We must not be cheated out of our rights."

" His tunic," continued Piso, " is belted tight, and I perceive that he wears some kind of greaves, which reach higher than the knee, that will protect him from the brute's teeth. Moreover, I noticed a contrivance in the horse's housings to rest the feet—you might call them *stapedæ* ; they seem to be made of plaited hide."

" I don't care for his greaves," returned the child ; " the teeth may not wound him, but they will pull him off or make him lose his balance all the same. It is agreed, is it not, that, as soon as he is mounted, the muzzle is to be slipped off the horse?"

" Certainly," said Piso.

" Then the rest is certain," said the other. " How is it contrived, do you know?" added he.

" The muzzle consists of a mere roll of hide," replied Piso ; " and it is those long reins alone which keep it folded, being passed in opposite directions round the animal's nose ; while therefore both the reins are pulled, or held tight, they bind the muzzle ; but when one of them only is pulled, it opens the muzzle. Each groom has the same kind of double rein ; and each, acting in concert, will set the beast free as soon as they receive the signal."

" Who gives the signal?"

"The rider himself, when he is fairly seated; but Tiberius will tell him when to mount."

"Go on with your description of his dress and his looks. Does he seem to be afraid?"

"He still wears that queer sword; I should have fancied it cumbersome to him. Afraid! I should say not. No sign of it."

"Per omnes!"

At first, this dialogue was sustained in a whisper; but as the lull of all noise was again gradually replaced by that hoarse hum, which is blent out of a hundred thousand low-toned murmured words, Piso and the child Caligula raised their own voices, and the last exclamation of Piso was as loud as it was sudden.

"Has anything further taken place?"

"Why, yes," said Cneius Piso; "and something which I do not understand. That old freedman of the youth, together with Thellus the gladiator, have approached him, and Thellus holds in each hand a sort of truncheon about a yard or more long; the top of which for more than a foot is black; the rest is sheathed or plated in bronze; the black top of the truncheon is thick; the rest, which is sheathed in the metal, is much thinner. The freedman who is by Thellus's side holds a small horn lantern in one hand, and tenders with the other a pair of large woollen gloves to his young master, who is even now putting them on. As he puts on his gloves he looks round the benches; he is looking our way now. What can he mean? He has the audacity to wave his hand, and smile, and nod in this direction!"

The slave whom we have mentioned as forming the

fourth in this group was no other than Claudius, whose part Paulus was now performing.

"By your leave, most honored lords," said Claudius, "I think I am the person whom that valiant youth is saluting."

"True," said Piso, "he has taken your destined office to-day, has he not?"

"Yes, my lord," returned Claudius; "and having caught sight of me, he beckoned to me, doubtless, to bid me have good courage."

"Well!" ejaculated Piso, "that is a good joke. I think it is you who ought to beckon to him to have good courage. He needs it more than you."

A moment after this remark, Cneius Piso suddenly turned to the child Caligula, and informed him that Tiberius was signing to him (Piso) to go down into the arena, and mount one of the spare horses; and, although unwillingly, he must go.

"And how shall I know what occurs?" cried the passionate, voluble boy. "It is like plucking out one of my eyes. Herod Agrippa here speaks Latin with such a dreadful, greasy accent, and so slowly; he is but learning the language."

Piso rose and said, "I have no choice but to obey; you have the slave Claudius with you; he not only speaks fluently, but I'll answer for it he will watch all the stages of the struggle with at least as much attention as any person in all this crowd will! His liberty, his wedding, and fifty thousand sesterces are at stake."

Saying this, he descended the steps of the narrow gangway which was (with scores of similar stairs) the means contrived for reaching and quitting the higher

seats in the temporary circus. A few moments afterward, he was seen in the arena riding by the side of Tiberius to and fro.

"Now, slave, remember your duty," cried the child Caligula; "let nothing escape *your* eyes or my ears. What next?"

"Those queer-looking staves, my lord, which the illustrious Cneius Piso has mentioned as being in the hands of Thellus, have passed into those of the young knight, who is to conquer the terrible brute."

"What? the two truncheons with black, thick ends, and the rest of their length sheathed in metal? do you say that the knight Paulus has taken them into his hands? What good can they do him?"

"Yes, my lord; he has now passed both of them into his left hand, and holds them by the thin ends. Thellus has withdrawn a few paces; the old freedman, Philip, remains still near the youth. Ha!"

"What?"

"Tiberius Cæsar has signalled the arena to be cleared. O gods! we shall soon see the issue now. I care not for my freedom; I care for the safety of that brave young knight."

"Does he, then, seem to shrink?" asked the child.

"I do not," replied Claudius, "observe any shrinking, my lord. It is I who shrink. He has drawn slowly near the horse in front, and stands about half a yard from his left shoulder. He is following Tiberius Cæsar with his eyes."

"Go on!"

"The arena is now clear of all save on the one hand the two Cæsars and their retinues, who have taken their

stand very near to us, just opposite to and beneath this platform, my lord; and on the other hand, the group around that horrible animal. Ah! me miserable! Tiberius Cæsar lifts his hand, and you hear the trumpet! That is the signal."

"I hear it! I hear it!" cried the child, in a sort of ecstasy. "What follows now? Has the knight Paulus mounted?"

"No, my lord; he has——"

"He shrinks, does he not?" interrupted the other, with a taunting giggle.

"The horse trembles in every limb," said the slave; "his nostrils dilate and quiver, and show scarlet, as if on fire; and his eyes shoot forth a blood-red gleam, and he has stooped his head, and——"

"But the man, the man?" screamed Caius; "what of him? Has he not failed, I say—lost heart?"

The most profound stillness had succeeded to the hubbub of blended sounds which a moment previously filled the air.

A trumpet blew a shrill prolonged minor note, and the child, laying his hand on Claudius's shoulder, and shaking him violently, cried to him to proceed with his descriptions; addressing to him again the query, "Has that young man mounted? And if so, in what style, with what success?"

Notwithstanding the despotic impatience with which the inquiries were urged, the slave Claudius did not at first reply; and the infant heard rapid, eager murmurs on all sides follow the trumpet blast, then a general burst of exclamations, which were instantly hushed.

"Why do you not speak?" said Caius, in a species of whispered scream.

"Pardon a momentary abstraction," replied Claudius. "While the trumpet was yet sounding, the young knight Paulus took off his hat quickly and bowed toward Tiberius Cæsar and the emperor; and replacing his hat, he beckoned to the freedman Philip. This last has approached him, and they are even now speaking together."

"Ha! ha!" interrupted the child; "then he has not mounted. He neither dares nor can he."

"Philip," pursued Claudius, "has opened the lantern; his young master is thrusting the staves toward the light; the ends have caught fire, in a dull degree, with some smoke accompanying the flame. He turns quickly away from the freedman, and holding the staves still in his left hand, and a little away, he approaches the horse; now he stands with his feet close together. Oh! he has sprung clean from the ground; he is in his seat. He has seized the bridle in his right hand and carried it to his mouth; he takes it between his teeth. He is now relieving his left hand of one of those torches; he holds one in each hand, somewhat away from the body, nearly horizontal. The cavasson-holders at a distance are removing the muzzle, and the rider sends his feet firmly, yet I think not very far, through those rests which the illustrious Cneius Piso mentioned, those *stapedæ* of hide, the like of which I never saw before. I wonder they are not always used."

"What of the horse? Is he motionless?"

"Not less so than a statue," replied the slave; "excepting the eyes and nostrils, which last exhibit a

tremulous movement, and show scarlet, like hollow leaves or thin shells on fire. The brute's concave head, from the scarlet nostril to the lurid eye, looks wicked and dire."

"How looks the rider?"

"Calm and heedful; the slight occasional breath of air from the east carries away to the front the slow flame, blent with a little smoke of those torches which he holds one in each hand."

"What can they be for?"

"I know not," replied Claudius.

"I suppose they are intended," said the child, "to compel the Sejan horse to keep his head straight. Thus your volunteer-substitute need not fear the beast's teeth. The issue seems, then, to be reduced to a trial of sheer horsemanship."

"And in such a trial, most honored sir," replied the slave, "I begin to have hopes. You should see the youth. The leading-reins are now loose. The muzzle is snatched away, and the contest has begun. Surely it seems one between a wild beast and a demigod."

"Is he thrown?"

"No; yes; so help me! he is off, but is off standing."

"Explain; proceed—I tell you, proceed!"

"The horse, after a series of violent plunges, suddenly reared till he had nearly gained a perpendicular position upon his hind legs, the fore-feet pawing the air. The rider, who seemed to be as little liable to fall as though he had been a part of the animal, then quickly passed his right foot out of the far *stapeda*, and dropping the bridle from his teeth, slipped down on the hither side.

Hark! did you hear the crash with which the fore-feet have come down? The steed seemed to be very near falling backward, but after a struggle of two or three seconds recovered himself; the centre of his weight had not been carried rearward of the vertical line; and, O ye gods! just as you heard that ponderous thud with which he descended upon his fore-feet, the youth darted from the ground with a spring like his first, and he is now on the brute's back as before. He stoops to the horse's neck; he has caught the bridle in his teeth, and lifts that brave, clear face again. Listen to the multitude! Oh! how the *euge, euge*, thunders from a hundred thousand sympathetic voices."

"Ah, my sight!" cried the child Caligula.

"Ha! ha!" continued Claudius, transported out of himself. "I shall get my liberty to-day! Nor will my benefactor be injured. Ha! ha! The fell beast of a horse seems astonished. How he writhes his back, curving it like some monstrous catamount. And lo! now he leaps from the ground with all four feet at the same time. I never saw the like, except in animals of the cervine tribe. Ha! ha! leap away! Yes, stoop that ferocious-looking head, and shake it; and lash out with your death-dealing hoofs. Your master is upon you, in his chair of power, and you'll shake your head off before you dislodge him from it. It is not with the poor literary slave Claudius that you have to deal! Oh! what a paroxysm of plunges. I was frightened for you, then, brave young knight; but there you sit yet, calm and clear-faced. If I was frightened for you, you are not frightened for yourself."

"Oh! for a few minutes' sight!" said the child.

“Has not the horse tried to twist his head round, and so to bring his teeth into play?”

“Even now he tries,” replied Claudius; “but he is met on either side by the torch. The fiercest beast of the desert shrinks from fire. Prudent and fortunate device! Lo! the horse seems at last to have ascertained that he who has this day mounted him is worthy of his services; do you hear the tread of his hoofs, as he traces the circle of the arena, guided by those steady hands from which flames appear to flow. Faster and faster rushes the steed, always restrained and turned by the outer torch, which is brought near his head, while the inner is held further to the rear. His sides are flecked with foam. The pace grows too rapid for a short curve, and the steed is now guided straight for the western opening in the arena opposite to where we sit, while the light breeze from the east counteracts the current of air made by the animal’s own career, and keeps the flare of those torches almost even. They are gone; and again hark! Is not that shout like the roar of waters on a storm-beaten shore, as a hundred thousand men proclaim the success of a generous and brave youth, who could face the chance of being torn limb from limb in order to give to a poor slave like me, condemned to a frightful death, his life and his liberty, a home and a future?”

“But surely,” said the imperial child, “it is not over so soon. It is like a dream.”

“I have tried to make you see what I saw,” returned Claudius. “It was a wonderful struggle—the youth looked beautiful; and in the swift whirl, as you beheld the graceful and perfect rider, his hands apparently

streaming with flames, and his face so calm and clear, you would have imagined that it was one of those beings whom the poets have feigned and sung, as having gifts superior to the gifts of ordinary mortals, who was delivering some terror-stricken land from a demon, from a cruel monster, and compelling ferocity, craft, uproar, and violence to bend to far higher forces, to man's cool courage and man's keen wit."

Augustus, in his later years, showed a decreasing relish for the bloodier sports of the arena; and, in deference to his taste, the next spectacles were, first a mere wrestling match, and then a combat at the cestus, in which the effort was to display skill rather than inflict injury.

This contest was just over, and the sun, as if in wide-flowing garments of red and golden clouds, had sunk level with the broad western opening of the amphitheatre, when the hum of voices was hushed once more, and Claudius was commanded in a whisper to resume his task of rendering the scene upon which the child's bodily eyes were temporarily closed, visible to his mind.

"I cannot with certainty discern," said the slave, "what occurs; there is such a vast heavenly shield of red light hanging opposite to us in the western sky. Against it, approaching at a walking pace toward the gap in the arena, along that avenue of chestnut trees in the country, I see a horseman. All eyes are turned in that direction. It is *he*; it is Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, returning on the Sejan steed; the animal is enveloped in sweat, and dust, and foam, and rather stoops the head which looked so fierce two hours ago; the rider has thrown away those torches, and now holds the reins

low down on either side, a little in front of the beast's shoulder. His hat is gone, and his brown locks, as you see them against the sun, are so touched with the light that he seems to wear a head-gear of golden flames. Hark! again, as before, the people and the army shout to him. He is bowing to them on each side; and now, as he advances, what do I see?"

The slave paused, and the child impatiently cried:

"How can I tell what you see, you dog? You are here for no other purpose than to tell *me* that."

"He has streaks of blood upon his forehead," resumed Claudius.

"Oh! oh!" cried the other; "the branches of the trees have no doubt struck him. Is he pale? Does he look faint? Is he going to fall off?"

"No," said Claudius; "he has reined in the horse, which stands like a horse of stone in the middle of the arena. Tiberius and Germanicus have both ridden toward him, with their retinues of mounted officers behind them. They have halted some six yards from him. They are speaking to him. As they speak, he bows his head and smiles. A crowd of people on foot have broken into the arena. The grooms have drawn near, at a sign from Tiberius; they are cautiously approaching the Sejan beast; but this last shows no restiveness. They have slipped the muzzle round his nose, under the reins. The youth dismounts. I do not see him now; he has become mixed with the crowd, I think; yes, it must be so, for I miss him altogether."

Augustus now rose, and his rising was taken by the multitude as a signal that the entertainments of the amphitheatre for that evening had closed.

Half an hour more and the scene was left to its solitude ; and where the cries and shouts of that mighty assemblage had mounted to the very heavens, there was no sound left except the humming of the insects and the rustling of the trees.

That night, in the large veranda or bower, which hung its arch of leaves and flowers over the landing of the Lady Aglais's apartments, at the Inn of the Hundredth Milestone, were assembled an exceedingly heterogeneous but mutually attached company, with every member of which the reader has made acquaintance. Paulus's mother, his young sister Agatha, Claudius (no longer a slave, and now wearing the *pileus*), Crispina, with her daughter Benigna, the betrothed of this slave Claudius, Thellus the gladiator, and Dionysius the Athenian, were there, and they all heard Paulus relate a very strange occurrence, with which he made them acquainted in the following terms :

"Mother," said he, "the most extraordinary incident connected with this happy day remains to be told. I am sure that the great and mysterious Being who is expected by Dionysius here soon to descend upon earth, and to whom I offered my life, has protected me this day. He has surely protected me, and has received with favor my endeavor to rescue from brutal power an oppressed and innocent young couple. The most extraordinary incident connected with my undertaking, I say, is not yet known to you. Last night I could not sleep soundly. At last, long before daybreak, I rose, dressed myself, and, kneeling down, besought that Being who is to appear among us to remember that I was trying to

please him by this enterprise, and that I was acting just as Dionysius and I had concluded it would be agreeable to this beneficent being. An inexpressible feeling of calmness and confidence arose in my heart as I rose from my knees. I then took my hat and went out of doors. I first strolled yonder, up and down that laurel walk in the garden, and afterward sauntered into the fields and wandered pretty far, but I observed not whither. Presently I began to feel that inclination to sleep which had deserted me in my bedroom; and, knowing the sun would soon rise, I chose a shady spot under a clump of trees, and, lying down, fell fast asleep immediately. *I had no dream*, but was waked by feeling a hand upon my forehead. Opening my eyes, I beheld a woman, very aged and venerable, but with a most beautiful countenance, despite her years, bending over me. Her countenance was solemn as the stars, and, I know not how, impressed me like the face of the heavens at midnight, when the air is clear and calm. Her hair was not gray, but white—white as milk. She wore a long, black mantle, the hood of which, like that of Agatha's *ricinium*, was brought over the head, but not further than the middle of the head, so that I could see, when I rose to my feet (as I instantly did), that her long, flowing, white locks were parted evenly and fell below the shoulder on each side. She held in her left hand a long staff, and her right was extended toward me as if bespeaking attention. She said to me in Greek these words: ‘BY MEANS OF FIRE YOU CAN SUBDUE THE FEROCIOUS BEAST.’ She then laid the hand which was stretched forth upon my head for a second, drew the hood further over her head, and departed with


swift steps, leaving me to gaze after her in amazement—an amazement which increased when I perceived that her words could be applied to the Sejan horse. It was those words, mother, and nothing else, which gave me the idea of employing the torches, which my good Thellus here afterward prepared for me out of some gladiatorial exercise-weapons which he possessed; and I may for certain say that, without the torches, I must have been destroyed by that horrible brute.”

“You truly describe this incident as extraordinary, my son,” said the Lady Aglais, after a pause.

“Paulus,” said Dionysius, “*you have seen the Sybil*. You must accompany me in a few days to Cumæ, where we will seek an interview with her upon the subject concerning which all the Sibyls sing and prophesy—the general reparation of this disorder-tortured world.”



CHAPTER IV.

WO days afterward, Dionysius the Athenian, called at the inn, and informed Aglais, Paulus, and Agatha that after the banquet in the Mamurran palace at Formiæ that evening, there was to be a great gathering of the witty, the noble, the fashionable, and the wise, and that he was charged to invite Aglais and her two children as friends of his.

Aglais declined the honor for herself and her daughter, but said she wished Paulus to go with Dionysius. Paulus, therefore, laid aside the outlandish costume in which he had travelled from Thessaly, and dressed himself with care in the fashion suitable to a young Roman of equestrian rank. Dionysius remained to join the family in their repast, which was virtually what we should in modern times call the early dinner, after which the two friends mounted Dion's chariot, and proceeded toward Formiæ at an easy pace, along the smooth pavement of the "queen of roads."

During the drive they had a conversation which was, for good reasons, very interesting to Paulus.

"A most capricious course," said Dionysius, "is your suit or claim running. In seeking to recover your family estates, you prudently avoid at first bringing the holder into a court of law; for the judges might shrink from voiding a title which not only arises out of an express gift of Augustus, but is identical with the title under which half the land of Italy has been held since the battle of Philippi. Instead of an immediate lawsuit,

therefore, you try a direct appeal to Augustus, offering to show him that at the very time when your father's estate was taken away, he had just rendered the same services for which, had he been willing to accept it, he would, like so many others, have had a right to be endowed with a new estate, taken from some member of the defeated party. But Augustus refers you back to the courts, where, for the two reasons mentioned, you fear the result. But two other reasons might be added for fearing it still more; first, the present holder is dreaded on account of his political power and his station; Tiberius is the man who, by marrying the daughter of Agrippa Vipsanius, has come into possession of your property; secondly, wealth is necessary for the success of such a suit; wealth he has, and wealth you have not. The courts present, consequently, but small hopes; yet you fail to get Augustus to decide your case himself. Have I correctly stated the position of your affairs?"

"To a nicety," replied Paulus. "Had I interest at court, I should find justice there."

"In your case," said Dionysius, "*interest at court* would be equivalent to justice *in the courts*. As I took precisely this view of the business, and as Augustus has paid me such honor, and shown me such partiality as few have found with him for many years, it occurred to me that if I threw my unclaimed and unexpected *interest* into the same scale wherein your just demands already lay——"

"Ah! kind and generous friend," interrupted Paulus, "I understand."

"Not so kind, nor so generous," replied Dionysius, "to my friend Paulus as I saw Paulus show himself to

be the day before yesterday to a stranger and a slave. But hear me out. No sooner did I tell Augustus that I had a favor to ask of him, than he placed his hand on my mouth and said: 'I like to hear you talk; but mine has been too busy a life to permit me to draw forth by properly opposing you the full force of your own opinions—OR THE TRUTH. The truth in these matters' (not your affair, Paulus, but philosophy) 'is the only truth which can interest a man about to die. You must state these views in the presence of young, vigorous, and not preoccupied intellects. If you hold your own as well against what they can allege as against my objections, submit to me afterward your petition. One thing at a time.' This and the like, with the indomitable whim and obstinate waywardness of age, he has continued to fling at me whenever I have renewed the attempt to state your case; and I have done so five or six times. Titus Livy and Quintus Haterius, whom I have consulted, advise me to take literally and in the spirit of downright business this curious caprice. Now, do you know to-night is appointed for a sort of arena-fight? All the gladiatorial intellects of the west are to be arrayed to crush the fantastic theories and pretty delusions of a Greek, an Athenian. All motives chain me, all pledges prevent me; moreover, honor and truth, to say nothing, my friend, of your own personal future, interdict me from flight."

"Flight!" cried Paulus; "*you fly?*"

"Ah!" said Dionysius; "you know not all that I mean. You and I have been differently reared, yet in the same spirit. However, as you said, when at the risk of your own life you stood between oppression and

an innocent young couple, the great Being whom we both expect will be pleased with a willing effort after what is right.

“But here we are at the gates of Formiæ. How the palace of the Mamurras glitters! How these narrow streets flare with torches! We must go at a walk. Charioteer, let the litters pass first. Yes, my friend, in the painful position in which I shall be forced to stand to-night (and I blush beforehand, knowing my incompetence, my ignorance, and the intrinsic difficulty of what I am expected to do), your future fortunes and the rights of your family are by a strange caprice made dependent upon the success with which I may be able to defend ideas of general and unchangeable value, beauty, and truth; ideas which it debases a man not to have, and exalts him to entertain; ideas which were always dear to the greatest minds that have preceded us, and which are reflected in every calm and pure soul, as the stars in fair, sweet lakes, although the putrid, slimy pool, and the waters tossed with storms, and an atmosphere darkened with clouds, may forbid the image, by intercepting the heavenly light or defacing the earthly mirror.”

While Dionysius thus informed Paulus of the singular and close connection which had arisen between the future prospects of his mother, his sister and himself, as well as the establishment of their rights, and the success with which Dionysius might this night be able to make good his philosophical doctrines against the wits, the orators, and the sophists of the Augustan court, at the same moment Tiberius was conversing upon the same subject

with Domitius Afer and Antistius Labio in a room of the Mamurran palace.

"Just," said he, in continuation of a conversation previously commenced, "as if a person's claim to an estate could be rendered either better or worse by the style of his horsemanship!"

Here Domitius Afer laughed heartily, and showed his admiration of Cæsar's wit. Labio, a saturnine, laborious man, son of one of the assassins of Julius Cæsar, and author of numberless works, preserved a grim, unsmiling air as he observed :

"A man may ride over an estate and over all its hedges and ditches; but he must be no bad rider if he can jump his horse into a title to become its proprietor."

"Nevertheless, the infatuation of Augustus for the Greek friend of the claimant is such that if the Athenian acquits himself successfully to-night in the Mæcenas-like criticisms and Plato-like discussions which are, I suspect, to vary our entertainments, he will next suffer the golden-tongued youth to state the case of Paulus Lepidus Æmilius. The effect at which you must aim is to make a fool of the Athenian; and you are the men to do it. Refute everything he says, ridicule him, cover him with confusion; make him the gibe of the whole court, the derision of the brilliant circle assembling here to-night. Put an end to his influence. We want no more mind-battles in Italy. I set dogs upon a dog. Arouse all your attention. Bend all your energies. Let the stranger retire from among us in disgrace."

That night, the most brilliant company which could then be culled out of the human race was assembled in the central impluvium of the Mamurran palace and its

arcades. Lamps, hanging from the festoons of creeping plants which adorned and connected the porphyry pillars of the colonnades, mingled their gleam with the light of the moon and stars. The variety of rays, of shadows, and of coloring which were thus sprinkled over the flowers, the leaves, the walls and pillars, the faces, figures, and dresses, produced a scene which a painter could better render than words can. The central fountain was smitten into a sorcery of tints, as it shed into a large basin of green marble the drooping sheaf of waters, of which the materials were perpetually changing, and the form and outlines perfectly maintained, or instantly and perpetually renewed.

The Emperor and the Cæsars, Tiberius and Germanicus, with the famous authors we have already more than once mentioned, Livy and Lucius Varius and Vel-leius Paterculus, were present. Ælius Sejanus, the prefect of the Prætorians; Cneius Piso, the gambler; Plan-cina, his rich wife; Lucius Piso, his brother, governor of Rome; with many persons who then sparkled in the court orbits, but whose names have perished out of human memory; and Julia, the emperor's daughter, Tiberius's new wife; and Agrippina Vipsania, lately his wife, and Agrippina Julia, daughter of the former, sister of the latter, wife of Germanicus, and mother of Caligula; and Livia, the aged wife of Augustus himself, all appeared among the guests. Chairs and couches had been placed here and there. Augustus and the ladies we have mentioned were seated, some just within, others just without one of the arcades, between two of its columns, so that the moonlight fell upon some heads, the lamplight upon others; and a wayward, dubious mixture of both upon the

golden tresses of Agrippina Julia, and of a beautiful young girl near her, on whom Domitius Afer, the celebrated orator, was gazing with admiration. But she, when she at last observed his glance, fixed upon him such a look of combined scorn and amazement that the advocate winced and became livid. She was destined, one day, to be the subject of his fatal eloquence, and to appease by nothing less than her execution the vindictive vanity of the *orator*, because she had spurned the ambitious love of the man. Tacitus alludes to the poor Claudia Pulchra's brief tale.

Quintus Haterius, whose Shakespeare-like variety of mind and bewitching eloquence had, as Ben Jonson implies in a comparison already cited by us, few rivals, was seated not far from Augustus. Next sat Livy. Antistius Labio and his rival Domitius Afer, who now occupied the place and fame in the forum from which Haterius, on account of his age, had withdrawn, stood leaning against a pillar, each with his arms folded. Both these persons, as well as Livy and Haterius, wore the toga; Sejanus, the scarlet *paludamentum*. The other male guests—except Tiberius, whose dark purple robe was conspicuous, and Germanicus, who was dressed in the costume of a commander-in-chief—wore a species of large tunic, called *lacerna*, which (contrary to the tastes of the emperor, and despite of his frequently expressed disapproval) had become fashionable. The story mentioned by Suetonius is well known. One day Augustus, seeing numbers of the people wearing the *lacerna*, asked indignantly, in a line of Virgil's, could these be Romans, "*Romanos rerum dominos, GENTEMQUE TOGATAM*," and ordered the ædiles to admit none but toga-wearers into either the forum or the circus.

But this was many years before the evening with which we are now engaged.

Among the groups collected in the Mamurran palace were representatives of the three great arts, in mastering which the highest education of classic antiquity was exhausted; we mean the arts of politics, of public speaking, and of strategy—government, eloquence and war. They were all represented; each of them had its proper image in the groups we have described. As those pursuits constituted the favorite intellectual sphere, and comprehended all the fields of ambition, to be eminent in any one of them was to succeed in life, and to be adopted into that class of society of which so many distinguished members were entertained in the Formian palace on the night at which our tale has arrived.

If a man excelled, like Julius Cæsar, in all the three arts named, he could revolutionize the world. The mechanic arts, the fine arts, philosophy, physical science, mathematics, attracted individual votaries indeed; but were neglected by the ambition of a few, as well as by the indolence of many.

The mention of physical studies recalls Strabo, the geographer, who was among the guests this evening at the palace.

Many others who were there we need not enumerate; but some will claim a word and a glance. When Dionysius arrived, and introduced Paulus to the aged knight, Mamurra, the company was already numerous. Mamurra patted Paulus on the shoulder, and said, although the other day in the road he had not at once recalled old times, he remembered Paulus's brave father very well at the battle of Philippi; and that he, Mamurra,

had seen him and Agrippa Vipsanius together, rallying the wing which Mark Antony had broken, and that he himself had charged with the cavalry to help him. This speech was very gracious, and our hero, who well knew it to be true, blushed with pride and pleasure. While the glow of his natural and honorable emotion was still coloring his young face, as he bowed to Mamurra, the latter took him by the arm, and said in a low voice :

“ Come, let an old soldier present the son of a former comrade, whose life was honorable, and whose memory is glorious, to the master for whom they both fought with equal zeal, although unequal fortune.”

Augustus returned Paulus's low salutation with a faint yet not unkindly smile, and then looked with a sort of sleepy steadiness at Tiberius, who heard Mamurra's words, and whose face was apparently flaming with a dark red rage. Near Tiberius, who now threw himself upon the cushions of a couch plated with gold, just opposite the chair which Augustus had selected, stood a tall, regular-featured Brahmin-like man, in Asiatic dress, and next to this individual. Sejanus, with his usual air of supercilious composure, yet intent watchfulness.

The couch we have mentioned was long and large, and two ladies, one old, the other young, were already sitting at the further end of it. The first was Antonia, the mother of Germanicus, the second was Agrippina Julia, his wife. Just in front of them, upon a low stool, sat the son of the latter, Caius Caligula, with his eyes yet bandaged, as the reader will not be surprised to hear; while at his side, fidgeting with large red, lub-

berly hands, stood a big, loutish, heavy-looking boy, who was considerably the senior of that dear child. This was no other than Claudius, the fourth of the Cæsarian dynasty (or the fifth, if Julius Cæsar be accounted the first), reserved against his will, to mount the throne of the world amid panic and horror; that day when Caligula shall be hacked to pieces by Cassius Chærias, in the theatre of the palace at Rome.

Thus, three future rulers of mankind, destined to bear dire sceptres in dark and evil days, were around the white hairs of Augustus Cæsar to-night.

As Paulus stepped backward after Augustus's languid but not unkindly reception of him, Dionysius, who was just behind, moved quickly and gracefully out of his way, and Claudius, the big, loutish lad, being impelled thereto by the nature of him, shuffled forward so as to come in collision with Paulus.

"Monster!" exclaimed Antonia, ashamed of her son's awkwardness; "if I wanted to prove any one void of all mind, I would call him more stupid than you!" *

Paulus glided into the background, saying with a bow and a smile, "*My* fault!"

He now found himself in the immediate neighborhood of that eastern group which his young sister had described as presenting themselves one morning at the entrance of the bower in the inn garden, when she was there listening to the strange conversation of Plancina; we mean Queen Berenice and her daughter Herodias, and her son Herod Agrippa.

* "Mater Antonia portentum eum hominis dictabat; nec absolutum a natura, sed tantum inchoatum; ac si quem socordiæ argueret, stultitorem alebat filio suo Claudio." Sueton. Claud. 3.

They all three fixed their gaze upon him with that unabashed, hardy manner peculiar to the family, and Paulus was beginning to feel uncomfortable in their vicinity and under their scrutiny, when Germanicus Cæsar approached, and complimenting him upon his brilliant exploit two evenings before, asked him whether he would like to join the expedition which was to start next day to drive the Germans from the northeast of Italy?

If he would, Germanicus offered to mount him splendidly, and keep him near his own person, and make him the bearer of orders to the generals; in modern phrase, give him a place on the staff. Paulus thanked the commander-in-chief briefly and respectfully, and asked to be allowed to wait till noon next day before giving a more definite answer than that he should rejoice to accept the gracious offer; his mother and sister had no protector except himself, and he should not like to leave them, without first hearing what they said. Germanicus assented.

During the short conversation of which this was the substance, Germanicus had moved slowly up the gravel-walk; and Paulus, of course, attended him, listening and answering, not sorry, besides, to put some space between himself and the unpleasant Jewish group. By the time they had finished speaking, they had arrived opposite the couch where Tiberius, Antonia, and Agrippina were seated, with Germanicus's child, Caligula, as we have described, occupying a low stool in front of his mother Agrippina. Close by, leaning against a pillar, stood a youth in the uniform of a centurion who had a most determined, thoughtful countenance.

On the approach of Germanicus, he briskly quitted his lounging attitude to salute his commander.

"Young knight," said Germanicus to Paulus, "let me make you acquainted with as brave a youth, I think, as can be found in all the Roman legions; this is Cassius Chærias."

"Who, father," asked the shrill voice of the child Caligula, "is the brave youth, do you say?"

"Cassius Chærias."

"Are you so brave?" persisted the impudent child, shoving up his bandage impatiently, and disclosing a truly disfigured and malicious little face.

"I can't see you, or what you are like. But I think I could make you afraid if I was emperor."

The man destined hereafter to deliver mankind from the boundless profligacy, the wicked oppression, and the insane, raging, incredible cruelties of which it was daily the miserable victim by killing Caligula the emperor, looked steadily at Caligula the child, and said not a word.

"I should like to feel your sword, whether it is heavy," pursued the child. "Give it me." And he started to his feet.

"Silence! pert baby," said Germanicus, pushing him back into his place.

"It seems to me," said Augustus, looking round, and there was an instantaneous hush of general conversation as he did so, "that we have represented around us Europe, Asia, and Africa. Young Herod and his friends may count for Asia."

"You." added Augustus, addressing the tall, Brah-

min-like man who stood near Tiberius, "come from Egypt, do you not?"

"Mighty emperor," returned the other, in measured and sepulchral tones, "I come from the land where great Babylon once was the seat of empire."

No sooner had this man opened his mouth than the observant Sejanus started.

Approaching his mouth to the other's ear, he whispered,

"I have heard your voice before; you are——?"

"I am," replied the other, composedly eying his questioner, "Thrasyllus Magus—Thrasyllus, the student of the stars."

Sejanus smiled, twisted his mustache in his white fingers, and asked,

"Are you sure that you are not the god Hermes? and that you do not sometimes ride of nights, with your horse's hoofs wrapped in cloth?"

It was now the other's turn to start.

"Do you suppose," pursued Sejanus, still in a whisper, "that I had not every stable in Formiæ searched the night you played that trick on the road? I know my master Tiberius's taste for divination and the various deep things you practice. You, then, are the oracle who reveals to him the decrees of fate?"

The exchange of further remarks between these worthy men was here suspended; for Augustus again spoke amid general attention.

"I think," said he, "that we should all now be glad to hear Dionysius the Athenian." An eager hum of assent and approval arose from the jaded and sated, but inquisitive and critical society around.

"There are in your philosophy," continued Augustus, "two leading principles, my Athenian, in support of which I am both curious and anxious to hear you advance some solid and convincing reasons. You despise, as Cicero despised it, the notion of a plurality of gods. You affirm there is only one. You say that a god who could begin to be a god, or begin at all, can be no god; and that the true King of all kings, is the giver of whatever exists, and the recipient of nothing. That he is without a body, a pure and holy intelligence. That, as everything else is his work, there never were, and never will be, and never could be, any limits either of his power or of his knowledge. At the same time, you reject the notion, adopted in some Greek systems, that he is the soul of the visible universe, and this universe his body; affirming him to be antecedent to and independent of all things, and all other things to be absolutely dependent upon him.

"Is it not so?"

"Yes," answered Dionysius; "such is my assured conviction."

"This, then," said Augustus, "is the first question upon which I wish to hear you; and the second is, whether that force or principle within each of us which thinks, reflects, reasons, and is conscious of itself, will perish at our death, or will live beyond it, and is of such a nature that it will never perish, as Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, and many other illustrious men and very great thinkers have so ardently contended."

"Ah!" said Dionysius, in a voice indescribably sweet and thrilling, while all turned their eyes toward him; "unless that God himself assist me, I shall be quite un-

equal to the task you impose upon me, Augustus. I am not worthy to treat the subject upon which you desire me to speak. You are aware that many learned persons in our Europe expect, and for a long time have expected, some divine being to appear one day among men. I see the able governor of Rome, Lucius Piso. None will accuse Piso of credulity, none suppose him a weaver of idle fancies, or a dreamer of gratuitous reveries. An able administrator, an accomplished man of the world, and, if he will pardon me, more inclined to be too sarcastic than too indulgent, he, nevertheless, despises not this expectation. Our learned friend Strabo, whom I see near me, will tell you, moreover, how it prevails, and has from immemorial times prevailed, in various and often perverted forms, yet with an underlying essence of permanent identity, among the innumerable nations which make some thirty languages resound through the immense expanses of Asia. But Domitius Afer desires to interrupt me."

Afer said:

"I do not discern how this ancient and mysterious expectation which floats vaguely through the traditions of all mankind, and in a more definite shape forms the groundwork for the whole religion of the Jewish nation, can be at all connected either with the immortality of the thinking principle inside of us, or with the question whether there is one supreme, absolute, and eternal God who made this universe."

"All I would have added," replied Dionysius, "in regard to that expectation was, that after the appearance of this universal benefactor, many sublime ideas which hitherto only the strongest intellects have enter-

tained, will probably become familiar to the meanest—common to all.

“I pass to the two questions which Augustus desires to hear argued; and, first, let me collect the opinions of this brilliant company; I will then compare them with mine. What does Antistius Labio think?”

“I should have to invent a term to express my notion,” said Labio. “I think all things are but emanations from, and return to, the same being. What might be called pantheism, if we coined a word from the language of your country, best explains, I fancy, the phenomena of the universe. Everything is growth and decay; but as decay furnishes larger growth, everything is growth at last and in the total sum.”

“Is this growth of all things under any general control?” asked Dionysius.

“Each thing,” replied Labio, “is under the control of its own nature, which evidently it cannot change, and every inferior thing besides is under the control of any superior thing with which it may come into relations. Thus what is *active* is superior as such to what is *passive*; it is more excellent and a higher force to act upon, or sway, or change, or move, or form, than to be acted upon, moved or modified. The mind of an architect, for instance, is a higher force than the dead weight of the inert stones from which he builds a palace.”

“Then you hold that some things have force, and that there are greater and smaller forces?” asked Dionysius.

“Undoubtedly,” said Labio.

“Which is more excellent,” asked Dionysius, “a

force which can move itself, or a force which, in order to exist, must be set in motion by another ? ”

“ This last,” said Labio, “ is only the first prolonged; it is but a continuation, an effect.”

“ And an effect,” pursued the Greek, “ is inferior, as such, to what controls it; and inferior also in its very nature to that which requires no cause ? ”

“ Certainly,” returned Labio; “ I am not so dull as to gainsay that.”

“ Now favor me with your attention,” returned the Athenian; “ I want you to extricate me from a dilemma. Either everything which possesses force has received its force from something else; or there is something which possesses force, and which never received this force from anything else, and which, therefore, has possessed it from all eternity. Which of these two alternatives do you select ? ”

Labio paused, and by this time the whole of that strangely mixed society was listening with the keenest relish and the most genuine interest to the conversation.

“ I see whither you tend,” replied Labio, “ but I do not believe in that universal ruler and original mind, or first force, which you think to demonstrate. All things go in circles, and serially. Every force which exists has been derived from some other; and each in its turn continues the movement, or communicates the impact.”

“ Prettily expressed,” remarked Velleius Paternulus.

“ I beg Augustus,” said the Athenian, “ to mark and remember Labio’s words : ‘ Everything which has force has received its force from something else.’ Do you say *everything*, Labio, without exception ? ”

"Yes, everything," said Labio. "I conceive the chain to be endless."

"But *not having*, good Labio," replied the Athenian, "goes before *receiving*. I cannot, and you cannot, receive that which we have already. In order to say that we receive anything, we must first be without it—must we not? The state of not having, I repeat, precedes the act of receiving. Does any person deny this? Does Labio?"

No one here spoke.

"Then," said the Athenian, "in maintaining that everything which possesses force *has received* that force from something else, Labio necessarily maintains that everything which possesses force *was first without it*. I therefore perceive there must have been a time when nothing possessed any force whatever. The very first thing which possessed any, received it; but whence? For, at that time, there was nothing to give it. What says Labio? Is pantheism silent?"

"I wish to hear more," said Labio; "I will answer you afterward."

A momentary smile, like a passing gleam, lit up the faces of those around, as the Athenian, looking toward Domitius Afer, requested him the next to favor the company with his opinion upon the two momentous questions propounded by Augustus.

"I need not, like Labio, coin a term from the Greek," said Afer, "to describe my system. I am a materialist. I believe nothing save what my senses attest. They show me neither God nor soul; and I am determined never to accept any other criterion."

"Are you quite sure," asked Dionysius, "that you are

thus determined? I should like to shake such a determination."

"You'll fail," replied Afer, smiling.

"Which of your senses, then, has attested to you that very determination? Can you see, taste, smell, hear, or touch it? And yet you tell us you are sure of it. If so, you can believe in, and be sure of, something which has never been submitted to the criterion which alone you admit."

"A determination is not a thing," said Afer hastily, and with a little confusion.

"Was Julius Cæsar a thing?" persisted Dionysius; "because, if you believe that Julius Cæsar existed, having heard of him and read of him, your senses of hearing and seeing do not attest to you in this case the existence of Julius Cæsar, but simply the affirmations of others that he has existed. My hearing attests to me that Strabo says he has been in Spain; and this, if there were no other reason, would satisfy me that Spain exists; yet it is Strabo whom I hear. I do not hear Spain."

Augustus clapped his hands gently and laughed. Domitius Afer, with visible anger, exclaimed:

"I mean that I will take nothing but upon proof. Prove that the soul is immortal; prove that one supreme God exists. Everything which a reasonable man believes ought to be demonstrated."

"I hope," said Dionysius, "to prove those two truths to your satisfaction. But as you say that all we believe ought to be demonstrated, I will first offer you a demonstration that it is impossible to demonstrate everything. To prove any proposition, you require a second; and to prove the second, in its turn, you

require a third; and it is upon this third, if you admit it, that the demonstration of the first depends. But if you had fifty propositions, or any number, in the chain, what proves *the last of them?* ”

“ Another yet,” said Afer.

“ But,” said the Greek, “ either you come to a last, or you never come to a last. If you never come to a last proposition, you never finish your proof; you leave it uncompleted; *it remains still no proof at all*; you have not performed what you undertook. And if you do come to a final proposition, which is supported by no other, what supports it? ”

There was a little start of pleasure in the company at the sudden and clear closes to which the Athenian was, each and every time, bringing what seemed likely to have grown into intricate and long disquisitions.

“ My object, Augustus,” pursued Dion, “ was to show that we are all so made that we feel compelled to believe much more than we can prove. Otherwise, our knowledge would be confined within narrow limits indeed. He who knows no more than he can demonstrate, knows but little. May I now ask the distinguished orators, Montanus and Capito, for their theories respecting the questions which interest us so much to-night? ”

Quintus Haterius prevented any answer to this appeal. “ The eloquent and learned thinker,” said he—“ who will yet, I have no doubt, be the ornament of the Athenian Areopagus—has placed me, and, I think, many others near me, completely on his side, in what has hitherto passed. Young as he is, he has made us feel the masterful facility with which he is able to throw

light upon errors placed where truth ought to stand. The operation is highly amusing; we could pass a long evening in watching it repeated against any number of antagonists. But come, Dionysius, reverse the process; take your own ground; maintain it; raise there your system like your castle; and let those assail it, if they please, whom your aggressive genius on the contrary turns to assail."

"Haterius is right," said Augustus. "I could assist at any number of these collisions; but they take a form which presents your mind to us, my Athenian, as a hunter and conqueror rather than a founder."

"But I am no founder," replied the youth earnestly and modestly; "and I aspire to nothing of the kind. The fact is merely and simply this: After much study I have arrived at the conviction, first, that there is one absolutely perfect and eternal Being who governs the universe; and, next, that what thinks within each of us never will die. Since you desire to hear the reasons which have brought me to these conclusions, I cannot decline to state one or two of them at least—though this place, this occasion, and this dazzling company befit the subject far less, I fear, than if a few studious friends discussed it, sitting under the starry sky, on some quiet, unfrequented shore."

"Now we shall hear Plato," said Tiberius, with something almost like a sneer.

"Pardon me," said Dionysius, "Plato may speak for himself. You have him to read; why should I repeat him? Those who miss Plato's meaning in his own pages, would miss it in my commentary."

Julia uttered a taunting laugh, as she glanced at her

new husband Tiberius, whom she always treated with scorn.

"You remember, Augustus," Dionysius continued, "that a few minutes ago, Antistius Labio, in answering one of my questions, stated that a force which could move itself was more excellent, as such, than one which required to be set in motion by another, as the mind of the architect, said he, is superior to the stones from which he builds a palace. Labio then very justly added, in reply to another question, that what was moved only by the force of something else possessed no proper force of its own, its force being but a continuation of the first, an effect of the impact. He finally assented, when I showed that it is impossible that everything without exception which possesses force should have received it, because *not having* goes before receiving, and because this is only another mode of saying that every thing without exception was once devoid of force. If a particular being has received the force it possesses, that particular being must once have been without it; and if all beings without exception who possess force have received it, they likewise without exception must all, in the same manner, have been first without it, a supposed state during which no force at all existed anywhere. That any being should ever acquire force, when there was nowhere any force for it to acquire, would be an unsatisfactory philosophy."

"There has, perhaps, been," said Tiberius, "an eternal chain of these forces transmitting themselves onward."

"If," said the Athenian, "you admit the existence of any one being who possesses a force which he never

received from another, that being is evidently eternal. But to say that a being has received its force, is to say that its force has had a beginning; and to say that any thing begins, is to say that once it was not. A chain of forces all received is, therefore, a chain of forces all begun—is it not? Now, if they have all begun, they have all had something prior to them. But nothing can be prior to what is eternal; such a chain or series, therefore, cannot itself be eternal.”

“No link is eternal,” said Tiberius; “but all the links of the chain together may surely be so.”

The Athenian looked round with a smile at Tiberius, and said: “If all the forces which exist now, and all those which ever existed in the universe, without exception, have been received from something else, what is that something else *beyond all the forces of the universe*? They would all, without exception, have begun. To say this of them is merely to say that they were all non-existent once, and this without exception. In other words, the whole chain, even with all its links taken together, is short of eternal. If so, it has been preceded either by blank nothing, or by some being who has a force *not* thus received, a force which is his own inherently and absolutely, as I maintain. Tell me of a chain, the top of which recedes beyond our ken, that the lowest link depends on the next to it, and this on the third, I understand you; but if I ask what suspends the whole chain, with all its links taken together, it is no answer to say that the links are so numerous and the chain is so long that it requires nothing but itself to keep it in suspension. The longer it is, the greater must be the necessity of the ultimate grasp, and the stronger

must that grasp be ; and observe, it must be truly ultimate, otherwise you have not solved the difficulty ; nay, the suspending force must be distinct from and beyond the chain itself, or you do not account for the suspension. But I will put all this past a cavil. What I said respecting proofs to Domitius Afer, I say respecting causes to Tiberius Cæsar. No one denies that various forces are operating in the universe. Now, of two things, one : Either there is a first force, acting and moving by its own freedom, which, being antecedent to all other forces, not only must be independent of them all, but can alone have produced them all ; or else there is in the universe no force which has not some other antecedent to it. This last proposition is easily shown to be an absurdity ; *for to say that every force has a force antecedent to it, is the same as to say that all forces have another force antecedent to them ; in other words, that, over and above all things of a given class, there is another thing of that class.* Can there be more than the whole ? Can there be another thing of a certain kind, beyond all things of that kind ? Besides every force, is there yet another force ? If any one is here who would say so, I wait to hear him."

No one said a word.

"Then remark the conclusion," pursued Dionysius. "It is a self-contradiction to contend that there can be one thing more of a class than all things of that class ; therefore there is not, and cannot be, a force antecedent to every force in the universe ; therefore there is, and must be, in the universe, a force which is the first force, a force which has not and could not have any other antecedent to it. Now this force, being the first, could

be controlled by no other; by its action every other must have been produced, and under its control every other must lie."

"Do not you contradict yourself?" inquired Afer; "you show there cannot be a force antecedent to all forces, and still you conclude that there is."

"There cannot," said Dionysius, "be a force antecedent to all forces, because this would be one more of a class beyond all of a class. But there may be the first of the class, before which no other was; and this is what I have demonstrated to exist. That first force is antecedent, not to *all*, but to all *others*; there you stop; there is none antecedent to *Him*. As he is the first force, all things must have come from him. He made and built this universe; it is his imperial palace. You have asked me to prove that one eternal and omnipotent God lives. I have now given you an argument which I am by no means afraid, in this, or any other assembly, to call a demonstration. And it is but one out of a great many."

A low murmur of spontaneous plaudits and frank assent ran round that luxurious, but highly cultivated, appreciative, and brilliant company; and one voice a little too loud was heard exclaiming:

"It is as clear as the light of day, dear Dion!"

All eyes turned in one direction, and Paulus, whose feelings of admiration and sympathy had thus betrayed him, blushed scarlet as he withdrew behind the stately form of Germanicus, who looked round at him smiling, half in amusement, half in kindness.

"I do think it a demonstration indeed," said Augustus, musing gravely.

"How strangely must that stupendous Being," said Strabo, the geographer, "deem of a world which has come so completely to forget and ignore him!"

"Your reasoning," resumed Augustus, "differs much, as you said it would, from Plato's. Plato is too subtle for our Roman taste."

"So is he," said Dionysius, "too subtle, and, I think, too hesitating, for the taste of most men everywhere. I admire his genius, but I disclaim many of his theories, and am not a disciple of his school."

"Of what school are you?"

"I am dissatisfied with every school," replied the future convert of St. Paul, blushing. "But I am quite certain that there is only one God, and that he is eternal and all-perfect."

"What I have said, I have said because I believe it; not in order to play at mental swords with these eloquent and gifted men, whom I honor. There is, if we would look for it, a reflection of this great Being in our minds like that of a star in water; but the water must be undisturbed, or the light wavers and is broken. We see many beings, greater and smaller. Now, who can doubt that, where there are greater and smaller, there must be a greatest? Each one of us is conscious and certain of three things: first, that he himself has not existed from all eternity; secondly, each of us feels that he did not make his own mind; and thirdly, that he could not make another mind. Now, the mind who made ours must be superior to any thing contained in what he thus made; therefore, although we can conceive a being of whose power, knowledge, and perfection we discern no possible limit, this very conception must

be inferior to its object. There must exist outside of our mind some being greater still than the greatest of which we can form any intellectual idea, however boundless. The lead fused in a mould cannot be greater in its outlines than the mould which presents the form. Again, no person will contend that the sublime and the absurd are one and the same thing—that the terms are convertible. But yet, if an absolutely perfect and sovereign being did not exist, the conception which we form of such a being, instead of constituting the highest heaven of sublimity to which our thoughts can soar, would constitute the lowest depth of absurdity into which they could sink.”

A little pause followed.

“Do you, then,” said Afer, with a subtle smile, “introduce to us the novel doctrine, that whatever is sublime must therefore be true?”

“If I said yes,” replied Dionysius, “and I am not a little tempted, you would succeed in drawing me aside into a very long and darkling road. But I have advanced nothing to that effect. My inference depended not on assuming that everything which is sublime must be true, but on the supposition that nothing which is absurd could be sublime.”

“Quite so,” remarked Haterius; “and was there not yet another inference dormant in what you said?”

“There was,” said Dionysius; “but it looks like subtilizing to wake it and give it wings; and as I am a Greek, I fear—I—in short, I have tried to confine myself to the plainest and broadest reasonings.”

“Fear not,” said Germanicus; “learned Greece, you know, has conquered her fierce vanquishers.”

Tiberius gnawed his under-lip; and the Lady Plancina, glancing at him and then at her husband, Cneius Piso, who was listening attentive but ill at ease, exclaimed :

“Enervated them, you mean!”

Germanicus threw back his head, smiled, and remarked: “To-morrow the legions are going forth to try against the Germans whether the Roman heart beats as of old; what was the further inference, Athenian?”

“Since there must,” said Dion, “where greater and smaller beings exist, be a greatest, we can all try to form some conception of him. Now, this conception must fall short of his real greatness. Why? Because, as I have demonstrated that this being is the first force, from which all others in the universe, including our minds, must have come, no idea contained in our minds can be greater than the very power which made those minds themselves. But, apart from this demonstration, every one of us can say, a being may exist so great as to be incapable of non-existence. Such a being is conceivable; it is his non-existence which then, by the very supposition, is inconceivable. Now, if there be something the non-existence of which would be inconceivable, while of the being himself you possess a notion, thinking of him as, for example, and terming him, the first force, eternal, boundless—giver of all, recipient of naught—the certainty of his existence is established already *for the heart*; for that faculty which precedes demonstration in accepting truth—for remember I have shown, and I have proved, that we are so made as to be compelled to believe far more than any of us can ever demonstrate.”

“This, then,” said Augustus, “is the dim image of which you spoke; the reflection of the star in water?”

“Yes, emperor,” replied Dionysius; “but not always dim; the deepest and the purest of all the lights which that water reflects. Often it reflects no image, however; and often it reflects but clouds and storms. To say you truly conceive a thing, is to say you are certain of it *in the way you conceive it*. If you conceive any thing to be certain, you possess the certainty of it. You may be certain that a thing is *uncertain*; in other words, you have arrived at a clear notion of its uncertainty. To conceive the contingency of an object, is to possess the positive idea that it is contingent. To conceive a necessary being, is to have the clear idea not simply that he is, *but that he must be*. He could not be conceived at all, he could not even be an object of thought, as both necessary and non-existent. All conceivable objects, except one, are conceived as either possible or actual. But that one alone is conceived as necessary, and, therefore, *necessarily actual*. Either a necessary being is not conceivable—and which of us, I should like to know, cannot sit down and indulge in the conception?—or, if he be so much as conceivable, then his reign is recognized, because far more than his existence is involved—I mean the impossibility of his non-existence.”

“Are all the dreams,” said Domitius Afer, “of a poet’s imagination truths because they are conceptions?”

A few moments of silence followed, and Paulus Æmilius looked at his friend with an expression of terror, which he had not exhibited in his own contest with the Sejan horse.

“When the poet,” replied Dionysius, “imagines

what might have been, he believes it might have been, and asks you to believe no more; but he would be shocked if you believed less; would be shocked if you told him he was depicting not that which had not been, for this he cheerfully professes, but that which *could not ever be supposed*. What I say here," added the Athenian, "belongs to a different and somewhat higher plane of thought. The impossibility to suppose non-existent an infinitely perfect being, who, on the other hand, is himself found not impossible to suppose, ought to bring home *to the heart* the fact that he lives. To be able, in the first place, to conceive him existing, and straightway thereafter to feel an utter inability to form even the conception of his non-existence, because it is only as the necessary being and first force that we can think of him at all, are a handwriting upon the porch of every human soul. He lives, I say it rejoicing, an eternal, necessary, and personal reality; the very conception of him would be an impossibility if his existence were not a fact; yes, and far more than a fact, a primeval truth and primordial necessity."

As the Athenian thus spoke in a clear and firm voice, which seemed to grow more musical the more it was raised and exerted, Augustus stood up and paced to and fro a few steps on the gravel walk of the impluvium, with his hands behind him and his eyes cast down. All who had been sitting rose at the same time, except Livia, Julia, Antonia, and the two Agrippinas.

"This," whispered Tiberius in Afer's ear, "is not much like failure, or derision, or disgrace for the Greek."

"My predecessor, Julius Cæsar," said Augustus at length, looking round as he stood still, "was the best astronomer and mathematician of his age—we have his calendar now to record it; the best engineer of his age—look at his bridge over the Rhine; the best orator, except one, to whom Rome perhaps ever listened; a most charming talker and companion on any subject; a very great and simple writer; as great a general probably as ever lived; a consummate politician; a keen, wary, swift, yet profound thinker at all times; a man whose intellect was one vast sphere of light; and yet I remember well in what anxiety and curiosity he lived respecting the power which governs the universe, and with what minute and even frivolous precautions he was forever trying to propitiate a good award for his various undertakings; how he muttered charms, whether he was ascending his chariot or descending, or mounting his horse or dismounting—in short, at every turn. Evidently it is not the brightest intellects, or the most perfectly educated, which are the most disposed to scout and scorn such ideas as we have just heard from Dionysius; it is precisely they who are prepared to ponder them the most."

"Julius Cæsar," said Tiberius, "thought, I suspect, pretty much as a great many others do, that this is a very dark, difficult subject; and that we cannot expect to come to any certain conclusions."

"Not to *many* conclusions," said Dionysius; "that much I fully grant. But two or three broad and general truths are attainable by means of reasonings as close, secure, and irresistible as any in geometry. One such proof—and pray do not forget that I said it was

only one out of many—making clear the fact that a single eternal God reigns over all things, I have laid before Augustus and this company already. My *last* remarks, however, were not disputations, but were only intended to show how those conceptions—to tear which from the mind would be to tear the heat from fire and the rays from light—tend exactly to that conclusion which I had *first* established by a rigorous demonstration.”

“Would not some call your inference from those conceptions themselves a demonstration also?” asked Germanicus.

“I think,” replied the Athenian, “that all would so call it if we had but time to examine it thoroughly. There are three other complete lines of argument, however, each of them as interesting as a poem; but so abstruse that I will not travel along them. I will merely show the gates which open into these ascents of the glorious mountain. It could, then, be demonstrated, first, that all things are objects of mind or of knowledge, *somewhere*; secondly, that all things undergo some action, or are objects of power, *somewhere*; thirdly, that all things are loved and cared for *somewhere*; and this as forming one whole work or production, that is, in their relations with each other. Now, the knowledge, the power, and the love (or care) in question can belong only to that first force of whom I speak; and I distinctly affirm, Augustus, that I believe I should be quite able, not to prove by probable reasons merely, but to demonstrate positively and absolutely, the existence of one omnipotent God, by three distinct arguments, starting from the three points I have mentioned. Yet I pass

by those golden gates with a wistful glance at them, and no more."

"It is the *horn* gates, you know," said Labio, smiling, "which open to the true dreams."

"Ah! poor Virgil!" said Augustus, first with a smile, and then with a long, heart-felt sigh. "I wish he could have heard you, my Athenian."

"The natures of things," said the Athenian, "and the number of individuals are known and counted *somewhere*; the attraction of physical things is weighed in a balance somewhere, and all things are maintained in their order by *limits*, and protected in their relations by a measured mark, *somewhere*. But as I have forbidden myself this vast and difficult field, I will turn elsewhere."

"Before you turn elsewhere," exclaimed Antistius Labio, "I would fain test by a single question the soundness of the principle from which you will draw no deductions; you say all things undergo some action. Does not this imply the actual presence of some force in or upon all things?"

"It is not to be denied," answered the Athenian.

"What force," asked Labio, "is actually present in or upon *inert matter*?"

"The force of cohesion," replied the Athenian; "and, moreover, the force of weight, which I take to be only the same force with wider intervals ordained for its operation."

A dead pause of an instant or two followed, and was broken by Herod Agrippa, who was a person bad indeed and odious, but of great acuteness and natural abilities, exclaiming, "The Athenian reminds me of the *number, weight, and measure* of our holy books."

"It is there, indeed, I found them," said Dionysius.

"You mentioned," observed Augustus, after musing a few seconds, "that the demonstration you gave us a while ago was only one out of many. I do not want any more, nor several more; but one more, might gluttony ask of hospitality? We roam the halls of a great intellectual fortress and mental palace to-night, superior to the palace of the Mamurras."

"Has it such an impluvium, Augustus?" chuckled the old knight, caressing his white mustache.

"The impluvium," said Dionysius, "is that part of the palace where the light of heaven falls? But the palace, Augustus, I take to be the sublime theme; my poor mind is only its beggarly porter and ostiarius. Suppose, then, there were only two beings in all the universe, one more excellent than the other, which of them would have preceded the other?"

No one replied.

"If the inferior be the senior," pursued the Greek, "by so much as the superior afterward came to excel him, by so much that superior must have obtained his perfections from nothing whatever, from blank nonentity; because the inferior, by the very supposition (*ex hypothesi*), had them not to bestow."

"The superior being," answered Augustus, "must therefore be the elder."

"You speak justly, Augustus," said the Athenian. "Therefore the less perfect could never exist, if the more perfect had not first existed. The existence, then, of imperfect beings proves the prior existence of one all-perfect being, self-dependent, from whom the endowments of the others must unquestionably have been derived."

"Cannot things grow?" asked Labio.

"Growth is feeding," answered Dion; "growth is accretion, assimilation, condensation in one form of many scattered elements. Growth is possible, first, if we have a seed—that is, an organism capable, when fed, of filling out proportions defined beforehand; and, secondly, if we have the food by which it is sustained. But who defines the proportions? Who ordained the form? Who formed the seed? Who supplies the air, the light, the food? Would a seed grow of its own energy if not sown in fostering earth, or placed in fostering air and light—in short, if not fed by the proper natural juices? Would it grow if starved of air, earth, light—thrown back upon its sole self? Is not growth necessarily stimulated *from without*?"

"Growth is a complicated and manifold operation," said Augustus, "implying evidently a whole world previously set systematically in motion."

"Whence, Labio," asked the Athenian, "comes your seed that will grow?"

"From a plant," replied Labio.

"Whence the plant?" pursued the Greek.

"From a seed."

"Which was first?" asked Dion.

"The plant."

"Then that plant, at least, never came from a seed," said Dionysius. "Whence came it?"

"The seed was first," said Labio.

"Then *that* seed," said Dionysius, "never came from a plant. Whence came it?"

There was a laugh in which not only Labio, but even Tiberius joined.

"No," said Dionysius, "whatever the power which traced out beforehand the limits and proportions which the seed, by growing or feeding, is to fill; whatever the power which surrounds that seed, or other organism, with the manifold conditions for its development, that power must be something more perfect and excellent than the elements which it thus dispenses and controls; and the existence of these less perfect things would have been impossible had not the other existed first. Thus, ascending the scale of beings, from the less to the more excellent, the simple fact that each exists proves that a being superior to it must somewhere else be found, and that the superior was in existence first. Until we reach that self-existent, all-perfect, eternal being whose life accounts for a universe which his power governs, and which without him would have been an impossibility.

"Without him imperfect things could never have obtained existence, and could not keep it for an instant; and without recognizing him they cannot be explained. This, Augustus, is the second demonstration for which you have asked me. I have just touched, in passing, the porches which led to three others. A sixth could be derived from the nature of free force. No force is real which is not free. The force of a ball flung through the air is really the force of something else, not of the ball. A hand imparted it; that hand was moved by the mind. In the mind at last, and there alone, the force becomes real, because there alone it is free. All the forces of nature could be shown to be thus communicated or derivative; and the question, where do they originate? would ultimately bring us to some mind—some intelligence. That intelligence is God."

"Could not all the forces of the universe be blind and mechanical?" said Afer.

"If so, they would none of them be free," said the Athenian.

"Well, be it so," said Afer.

"If not free," persisted the Greek, "they are compulsory; if compulsory, who compels them? I say, *God*. You would have to say, *nothing*; which is very like *having nothing to say*."

A clamor of merriment followed this, and Dionysius had to wait until it subsided.

"I am only showing," he resumed, "where and how the proof could be found. A seventh demonstration can be derived from the moral law. To deny God, or to misdescribe him, would necessitate the denial of any difference between good and evil, between virtue and vice. It would be a little long, but very easy to establish this; far easier than it was to make intelligible the two proofs which I have already submitted to you. I have said enough, however. This brilliant assemblage perceives that the belief in one sovereign and omnipotent mind is not a vain reverie for which nothing substantial can be advanced; but a truth demonstrable, which neither human wit nor human wisdom can shake from its everlasting foundations."

"I wonder," said Strabo, "whether this being, of whose knowledge and power there are no limits, is also mild and compassionate."

Dionysius was buried in thought for a short time, and then said,

"Pray favor me with your attention for a few moments. Love draws nigh to its object; hatred draws

away from its object, which it never approaches except in order to destroy it. But the non-existent cannot be destroyed; therefore the non-existent never could draw hatred toward it. Hatred would say, those things are non-existent which I should hate, and which I would destroy if they existed; therefore let them continue non-existent. But this sovereign being is antecedent to all things; in his mind alone could they have had any existence before he created them. If, then, he drew near them, so to speak, approached them, called them out of nothing into his own palace, the palace of being, love alone could have led him. Therefore, by the most rigorous reasoning, it is evident that creation is inexplicable except as an act of love. It is more an act of love than even preservation and protection. This omnipotent being, then, must be love in perpetual action; love in universal action, boundless and everlasting love."

"Certainly yours is a grand philosophy," said Augustus.

"This sublime being," pursued Dionysius, "is, and cannot but be an infinite mind; he is boundless knowledge, boundless power, and boundless goodness. The mere continuance from day to day of this universe—"

Here the Athenian suddenly stopped and looked round.

"Why, were the most beneficent human being that ever lived," exclaimed he, "able by a word to cast the universe into destruction; were it in his power to say, at any moment of wrath or disappointment, that the sun should not rise on the morrow, mankind would fall into a chronic frenzy of terror."

"If," cried a shrill voice—that of the child Caligula—

"if the sun shines and one cannot see, it is no use! I know what I would do with the sun to-morrow morning, unless I recover the use of my eyes."

"What?" asked Dionysius.

"I'd blow it out!" cried the dear boy, tearing off his bandage, stamping his feet, and turning toward his interrogator a face neither beautiful in feature nor mild in expression.

"The sun is in good keeping," said the Athenian.

Augustus turned, after a short, brooding look at Caligula, to Haterius, and said,

"What think you, my Quintus? Has our Athenian made good his theories?"

"He has presented them like rocks of adamant," responded Haterius. "Dionysius has convinced me perfectly that the universe has been produced and is governed by the great being of whom he has so earnestly and so luminously spoken."

"Yet one word with you, young philosopher," said Antistius Labio, sending a glance all round the circle, and finally contemplating intently the broad, candid brow and kindly blue eyes of the Athenian; "one word! You remarked that you could prove all things to be cared for and loved somewhere. You afterward mentioned that the care or love in question could be exercised by none save the stupendous king-spirit whose existence, I confess, you almost persuade me to believe. But now solve me a difficulty. You have alluded to the moral law. You maintain, although this has not been a subject of our debate to-night, the immortality of our souls. Finally,—none can forget it,—you hinted that there could be no morality, no difference between

right and wrong, virtue and vice, were there not one sovereign God. Does this mean, or does it not, that morality is that which pleases his eternal and therefore unchanging views ? ”

“ Ah ! ” said Dionysius, “ I perceive your drift. You land me amid real enigmas. But go on ; I answer honestly—*Yes.* ”

“ Then,” pursued Labio, “ if the ghost within us be immortal, it will be happy after death, provided it shall have pleased this being, and miserable should it have offended him.”

“ Yes.”

“ Now, Augustus,” persisted Labio, “ what would you think of the justice of a monarch who proclaimed rewards for conforming with his will, and punishments for thwarting it, but at the same time would not make it known what his will was, nor afford any protection to those who might be desirous of giving it effect ?

“ Can Dionysius of Athens or anybody else tell us what are the special desires of this great being in our regard ? Does he imagine that unlettered, mechanical, toiling men have either understandings or the leisure to arrive at the conclusions which his own splendid intellect has attained ? Then why is there not some authoritative teacher sent down among men from heaven ? ”

Dionysius answered not. Labio continued :

“ I speak roughly and plainly. I transfix him with his own principles. He is too honest not to feel the force of what I say. He cannot reply. Mark next : we live but a short while in this world ; and if we be immortal, our state here is downright contemptible in importance compared with that which has to come ; and

yet he tells us that this contemptible point of time, this mere dot of existence, is to determine our lot for everlasting ages, and he that says this proclaims the being whose existence he certainly has demonstrated to be the very principle of love itself. Yet this being who will establish our destinies according as we please him, tells us not how to do it."

Again the Athenian refrained from breaking the expectant silence which ensued.

"Would not one imagine," said Strabo, "that the most particular instructions would be given to us how to regulate a conduct upon which so much depends?"

"Yes," observed Labio, "and not instructions alone, but instructors, to whom occasional reference would be always possible."

All eyes turned toward Dionysius. He blushed, hesitated, and at last said:

"You only echo thoughts long familiar to my mind. I cannot answer. I am not capable of solving these difficulties. Time is not completed. I think, like the Sibyls, that some special light is yet to come down from heaven."

Here the conversation ended.

Half an hour afterward, Dionysius, who had begged to be excused for that night from entering upon the second of the two doctrines which he had been challenged to sustain, was walking part of the way with Paulus toward the Inn of the Hundredth Milestone, along the fretwork of light which was shed upon the Appian Road by the moon and stars through the leaves of the chestnut-trees.

"I feel confident, Paulus," said he, "that Augustus

will restore your family estates ; and should you accept the liberal offer of Germanicus Cæsar, and depart upon this German expedition to-morrow morning, I will watch your interests while you are absent."

"I know it well, generous friend," replied the other youth ; "and I do hope my mother will not object to my going. Only think, I may come back a military tribune! Only think!"

"Yes," said Dion, "and enter that great castle which glitters yonder in the moonlight as proprietor."

"If so, will you not," said Paulus, "come and stay with us?"

"That is an engagement," said the Athenian, "provided some day you will all pay me a return visit at Athens."

"We'll exchange the *tessera hospitalis* on it," exclaimed Paulus.

Thus they parted on the moonlit road, Dionysius returning to Formiæ, and Paulus walking onward with long, rapid strides.





PART III.

CHAPTER I.

NEXT morning, before the gray of the dawn began to kindle into sunrise, Paulus had completed with swinging strides the distance between Crispus's inn and the camp outside of Formiæ, and he stood before the Prætorium of Germanicus Cæsar, exactly as the commander-in-chief lifted its curtain door, and stepped forth.

"To come with us, or not?" asked Germanicus, smiling.

"To go with you, general," answered Paulus; "but my mother and sister grudge me this one day, and as Tiberius Cæsar has made me a present of the horse which I broke the other evening, and as an army travels far more slowly than a well-mounted individual, will you permit me to follow you to-morrow? Before your vanguard reaches Faventia (Faënza now), nay, before you are out of Latium, I hope to report myself."

Germanicus mused.

"Nay," said he, after a moment or two, "wait you at that Hundredth Milestone Post-house till you receive further orders. You shall have them this night."

The commander-in-chief then slightly raised his right hand, over which Paulus, taking it, bowed low.

That evening, in the bower of the veranda overlooking the garden of Crispus's inn, our hero was seated, not smoking, as so many generations of modern heroes have smoked, and not whittling, as American heroes when at leisure think 't necessary to whittle, but sedate and at his ease, listening to the occasional wise and keen observations of the Lady Aglais, and the less sparing conversation, the volatile, empty prattle, of his sister Agatha. While they were thus occupied, a well-known step came up the staircase from the garden.

"Dionysius!" cried Paulus.

The visitor brought them news for which they had not hoped. Augustus, who had first resolved not to listen to the suit of Paulus, had suddenly appointed a day for its hearing; and, moreover, it was agreed, by a sort of comity and indulgence, that Dionysius, although not a Roman lawyer, should be allowed to plead the case of his friend. Finally, the emperor himself, who, since the death of Mæcenæ, many years before the date of our tale, had desisted from this practice, was to preside in court for the day (to use modern parlance) as a judge in equity.

The wanderers were exchanging remarks of congratulation upon these important and unexpected tidings, when Crispus himself ran up the stairs, holding out a large letter fastened with the usual silken tie, and addressed to Paulus. The handwriting was very delicate, and yet a little careless and easy, the handwriting of a man who, while accustomed to write more than the Romans of high station (except, indeed, the professed

men of letters) usually did, could unite the dispatch of much business with a certain fastidious neatness even in trifles.

Paulus went to the dining-table, and opening the paper, out of which tumbled a gold ring, read as follows by the light of the scallop-shaped lamp at the top of the tapering pole which flanked one of the corners of the board :

“Germanicus Cæsar to Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, the centurion, greeting.”

“*He makes me a centurion already,*” said Paulus.

The letter continued :


“Do not follow the army directly. Go to Rome. Seek the house of Eleazar the Hebrew, near the lower end of the Suburra. Show him the enclosed ring, which he well knows as my signet, and demand of him the already stipulated sum of twelve millions of *sestertii* (twelve thousand *sestercia*), which is the pay of forty thousand of my common legionaries for one month. I mean to issue a fortnight’s pay as a bounty, extending it to all (centurions and horse as well as legionaries). *Post nummos virtus.* It would be far more convenient if you could bring this money to me in bronze or copper coin, the *as*; but this will be utterly impossible; you could not find horses to carry the load, nor a sufficient guard to convoy it. You must therefore make Eleazar pay you as much as possible in gold: for instance, in the gold *scrupulum*, each coin equal to five silver *denarii*. After receiving and reckoning the treasure, give him a written voucher signed with your name, and sealed with my signet. Pack the gold in strong iron chests or boxes; collect as a guard all the men you

can of the fourth centuria, to which you are appointed, and hasten, night and day, to join me at *Forum Alieni* (now Ferrara), on the Adriatic Sea. Farewell."

Paulus determined to start at daybreak upon this important and confidential mission, and, in order not to multiply leave-takings, he said adieu to his family and to Dionysius that night.



CHAPTER II.

T was about sunset in Rome when four persons of splendid stature, a trained martial bearing, and eminently gallant appearance, sauntered along one of the principal streets. They loitered here and there at a portico, or paused under a covered colonnade, to swell the momentary groups who were watching some Sardinian jester, or who listened with wonder to a sophist from the Greek islands as he declaimed. Two of these four men—for whom, as they strode along, the rabble made obsequious room—were still in the physical prime of life, and two in the flower of early youth. They were all plainly but neatly and carefully attired, not in the toga, but in the *sagum*; for there was war in Italy;* and the Germans, everybody knew, were even now to be expelled beyond the sacred frontiers, with carnage, and shame, and a great overthrow. Another impressive lesson was to be taught to all barbarians. The four men who wore the *sagum* were also armed, and some who noted them wondered why such men were there and not with Germanicus in Venetia. (News had been whispered, indeed, that the irruption had come much nearer than Illyricum, and that the barbarians, swarming round the top of the Adriatic, had defeated and dispersed the stationary guards, and were well within Italy proper.)

It soon grew dusk, and one of the four, who, al-

* Whenever there was war in Italy itself, the Romans donned the *sagum*.

though the youngest, seemed to exercise a species of authority over the rest, said:

"Now let us take a look at our stable, then at our men, after which the Suburra."

They went into an alley, threaded their way through a dense, motley, seething multitude of roistering idlers, the ebullition of which had once fermented clear into a Julius Cæsar, and presently they passed under an archway into a courtyard strewn with sawdust, where all was comparatively quiet—a creek, so to say, running out of a high sea into sheltering cliffs on either hand.

As they peered under a low porch into a stable lighted by lanterns, our old acquaintance, Philip the freedman, came out with a dust-covered and grim face, and saluted respectfully the youngest of the company.

"Twelve fine, strong Tauric horses, master Paulus," he said, pointing to twelve clean, well-littered stalls, "besides the Sejanus," added he, turning toward the stall immediately opposite the door.

"Are these all we can obtain?" inquired Paulus.

"Ah! and lucky too, master Paulus, to obtain these," answered the freedman; "they wanted forty *nummi aurei* a pair, but I chaffered them down a bit. This Rome is a nasty place, I can tell you, and, between ourselves, a dangerous place, too."

"But," said Paulus, with a serious look, "if we cannot mount the soldiers, we must travel at an infantry pace; the vehicles cannot leave the guard behind. However, where are the men, Philip?"

"Hard by, master. I will conduct you to their *thermopolium*."*

* Wine-shop : tavern. curiously enough, meant book-shop or stationer's.

Philip hereupon led the way, and the four followed till just within the lower end of the Suburra; pushing aside a curtain, he introduced them from the street into what appeared to be a den of raging maniacs.

Ten stalwart men, dressed and armed as soldiers, were seated opposite to one another on benches at each side of a long table, five a side. Earthenware vessels, called *cupæ*, full of common draught wine (*vinum do-liare*), loaded the coarse pine table, and each pair of soldiers appeared to be engaged in a deadly strife across the board. It was who should best "*micare digitos*," or "flash his fingers." The men were seriously gambling in that ancient traditionary way which still survives in Italy under the name of "*morra*," a wonderful instance of the tenacious capacity which popular customs possess to outlive political changes, the overthrows of dynasties, the revolutions of states and constitutions. The men thus gambling in the reign of Augustus Cæsar roared, grimaced, and gesticulated, as they exhibited on the one side, and guessed on the other, the number of fingers closed or straightened in the hands which they darted alternately against each other's faces; and nearly two thousand years later men still roar, grimace, gesticulate, and rave after the same manner over the same curious game in Italy, from Rome to the Boot of Magna Græcia. The only principle of skill in the game is that which gives its interest to the "Odd and Even" of our modern schoolboys.

It seemed as if the soldiers were on the point of massacring each other. The sudden apparition of Paulus and his companions at the door of their bower produced an amusing change of scene. Every gambler was petri-

fied and crystallized in his particular attitude and his own proper and peculiar grimace; but the yelling at once gave place to dead silence, as if by enchantment, and ten pairs of eyes gazed askance with a troubled expression upon the unexpected intruders. A word explained all to the foreign-reared Roman. Not a man of the howling company was in the slightest degree intoxicated.

"All is well, my men," said Paulus, with a smile; "be ready for orders night or day."

"Ay, ay! centurion," was the reply sung out in chorus; and as he left them the roaring recommenced—" *Duo ! Quinque ! Tres !* "

"Now for *our man*," said Paulus; and they ascended the famous, or rather infamous, Suburra about thirty yards. They stopped on the left side of the street going upward, at a door which a man with a pinched, withered, yellow face, a long, hooked nose, thick lips, and thick, overhanging red eyebrows, was in the act of closing. Paulus placed his hand against the door to keep it ajar, the man within set his shoulder against it, and shoved with all his might to close it home; the door quivered slightly, and remained as it was.

"Why, Cassius Chærias," observed Paulus, laughing, and turning to one of the two eldest of the not elderly group, "you could cut your way through this door, even if it were closed, more easily than through eight thousand infuriated mutineers."

In a recent mutiny of the legions under Germanicus in Gaul, the future slayer of Caligula had actually performed this astounding exploit, as Tacitus particularly recounts.

Cassius Chærias blushed, and slightly bowing, replied with a smile :

“ Our friend Thellus, here, who has left his tragic and thankless, although valiant, calling of the arena, to join us army-folk, even in the low rank of a decurion, could, I think, do more than cut his way through it. Give him a cestus for his right hand, and with one blow he would shiver it from top to bottom.”

Thellus said, addressing the frightened face within, “ Dear old man, open your door ; our leader here must speak with you, and we mean no harm.”

“ Go away, brawlers ! ” answered a quavering but vigorous voice, “ this is no wine-shop, nor anything of the sort.”

“ Look at this,” replied Paulus.

The person within held up a lantern, and examined the object extended toward him.

“ Oh ! ” exclaimed he, uttering some Hebrew invocation, unintelligible to his visitors ; “ the signet-ring of Cæsar ! Enter, illustrious sirs.”

And he held the door wide, while his visitors entered.

Having had occasion more than once already to describe minutely the architecture, form, appearance, furniture, and all the arrangements of people's houses in that age, I need not now either weary the reader or delay the story by dwelling any more upon antiquarian particulars. But in the present instance there was something unusual, which shall not, however, lead us into description. It must be left to display itself as our tale runs on.

Paulus noticed with surprise that the species of hall in which they stood seemed to lead nowhere. Eleazar,

meantime, shut and bolted the house-door, took up his lantern from the ground, pushed back a sliding panel in the right-hand sidewall, and then led his visitors in a direction parallel to the Suburra outside, along an internal passage lighted by a solitary sconce. At the end of the passage was a staircase, and at the top of this a door, half open. They passed through it; and Eleazar bolted and locked the door. Another but shorter passage in the same direction was terminated by a similar staircase and similar door, after passing which they found themselves in the real vestibule of the house—large, handsome, well lighted by a hanging lamp, paved with tessellated marble, and rising overhead into a concentric vault. Evidently, at some former time, the entrance of the house had been straight from the Suburra into this vestibule. While, indeed, they waited here for the Jew, who was fastening the last as he had fastened the first door, they could hear distinctly the roaring torrent of disorder and debauchery in the infamous street outside.

"A curiously constructed house, sir," remarked to Paulus the decurion Longinus, with a bewildered look in his handsome face. The Jew, who had come back as this was said, chuckled and observed, as he again led the way:

"If you lived in the Suburra, you would like to make your house difficult to enter."

Presently they arrived in a fine, spacious apartment, and beheld in the middle of it a table, on which were lights arranged so as to illumine a long lambskin scroll in characters new and strange to them, and a venerable, aged man seated at the table bending over the scroll, and standing at his side a young girl, who held in her

hands some kind of oriental embroidery, an end of which trailed along a pile of cushions from which she had apparently risen, leaving her work for a moment in order to look at a passage in the book at the call of the aged reader. The latter was so absorbed in his occupation that he was not at first aware of the presence of strangers; but the child, who stood on the side of the table opposite the door, looked up and gazed with surprise at the four martial-looking figures who strode behind Eleazar into the room. Whatever the amazement, nevertheless, of the young maiden might have been, Paulus was more astounded still; for, truth to say, he thought he could never have beheld anything beautiful until that moment. The newcomers having nearly reached the table, had halted, Paulus and Eleazar in front; and yet, even now, the old man, reading the scroll with his back to them, was unaware of their arrival, for, pointing with his finger to the page, he exclaimed in a tone eloquent with emotion:

"And this warrior, this patriot, this glorious hero, this matchless servant of the Most High, and champion of the people of God, this very same Judas Maccabeus, my grandchild, was my ancestor and yours—he belongs to our own line!"

"Your line; your own line," said Eleazar, in a harsh voice, and sneering, "is to mind your business, or rather my business; it is for *that* I give you your bread, and not for dreaming over the Scriptures. Who, think you, is going to pay the smallest consideration to you or your grandchild because you are descended collaterally from the Maccabees?"

At this bitter speech, bitterly spoken, the old man,

who, on the first sound of the voice, had turned round and risen, bent his head meekly, but yet with a certain dignity, and replied :

“I had finished the accounts you gave me. My grandchild and I are not asking for any consideration from you beyond what I earn. You need not remind us that a noble old race has fallen into poverty. Come, Esther.”

With this he was retiring, but the young girl burst into tears, and running to her grandfather, taking his hand with one of hers, and brushing her tears away with the other, she looked at Eleazar, and made the following speech :

“You rude, cruel man! you are always saying shameful, cruel words to my grandfather because he bears everything. But I will not allow you to speak so to my grandfather ; I will not bear it any more.”

Here she heaved a little sob, and added rather illogically :

“You ask who will pay grandfather any consideration because he is descended from a glorious warrior and a noble hero ? *I* will.”

Paulus, deeply interested in the unexpected interior drama which had thus suddenly been presented and played out before him, glanced at his martial comrades, and then said in a serious and kindly tone :

“Without intrusiveness, be it spoken, *I* will too. To be descended from a glorious warrior and noble hero is no small title to respect.”

The little damsel’s countenance cleared at once into sunlight.

“Well, well,” said Eleazar, “I meant you no offence,

Josiah Maccabeus. But go, now, and see to *half the treasure*," emphasizing the last words.

With a look of astonishment, which was not lost upon the observant Paulus, Josiah Maccabeus left the room, whereupon the young girl resumed her embroidery and her former place on the pile of cushions, and said, with a sly glance at Paulus :

"You have come, sir, I suppose, for the treasure which our master here, the Rabbi Eleazar, has got ready for the army, because the *Ærarium Sanctum* (public treasury) won't have enough money for some months?"

"Child, child!" exclaimed Eleazar, "who said I had the treasure ready?"

"*You* did, yesterday, Rabbi—don't you remember?—when our countryman, Azareel, came."

"You mistook, Esther. You can run, now, my dear, and see that some refreshments be prepared for these honored visitors."

During this short dialogue Paulus and his companions had their first good view of the person to whom they had brought Germanicus Cæsar's signet. None of them liked his looks."

"Surely," said Paulus, "you have the money ready?"

"It is, and it is not, honored sir. The greater portion I must receive from various persons who will not part with it except on better terms than those which the Cæsar offered to me. *My* share, however, I will cheerfully advance, as agreed."

"We will," said Paulus firmly, "either take the treasure with us this night, or we will take *you*, in order to prove to the commander-in-chief that we have executed his orders, so far as we are concerned."

"But you will leave me my profits," answered the Jew, "and give me, all the same, a voucher in full."

We will spare the reader the sort of argument which ensued. It has, in cases analogous, been repeated millions of times, all over the world, for thousands of years.

When all was settled, servants brought in wines and dainty refreshments, and little Esther, with extraordinary gracefulness of mien and language, pressed the visitors to partake of the various delicacies before them. Eleazar forthwith prepared to produce the treasure. Attended by Josiah Maccabeus (who had now returned) as his scrivener, and by many servants, he first directed a large and massive empty chest of wrought iron to be brought into the room. The chest ran upon rollers, or little wheels of hard wood, which were deeper than the thickness of a couple of stout poles, braced horizontally beneath the chest, and projecting beyond it at each end. The poles were thus kept from touching the ground. These poles, like those of a litter or "palkee," could be lifted and borne upon the shoulders of four or of eight men.

The next operation was to count the twelve thousand *sestertii*, or twelve millions of sesterces (nearly five hundred thousand dollars). And here it will be worth while to note the fact that the money was delivered in such proportions respectively of gold and silver coin—the *aureus nummus*, or gold denarius, worth, I believe, five dollars; the small gold scruple, worth about ninety cents; and, finally, the silver denarius, equal to about eighteen cents—that the whole treasure rose to a very considerable and unwieldy weight.

The operation of counting and packing the rouleaux in the chest occupied the party almost all the night, although they employed great diligence and a proper division of labor. Long before the task was over, little Esther had said farewell to the company, but ere doing this, she stole toward Paulus, stood on tiptoe, and reaching her hand to his shoulder, signified that she wished to whisper something in his ear. With a kindly smile the tall youth stooped, and with an important and serious face the child whispered. Chærias was the only one present who observed this little operation. The two other comrades of Paulus were bending over the chest and packing it; the Jew, Eleazar, was handing the rouleaux to Longinus and Thellus; while Josiah, Esther's grandfather, was busy with the stylus and a large slate-like tablet. Chærias perceived, when the whisper was finished, that Paulus looked for a moment fully as grave as the young girl. Paulus patted the girl's head and thanked her, upon which she bounded away to the door. Arrived there, she turned round, and, still directing her conversation to Paulus, whose appearance and manners had evidently much interested her, said aloud:

"Are you going to the war, sir?"

"Yes," said he.

"I thought," pursued Esther, "that you might have come back soon;" and she heaved a slight, fluttering sigh.

"You are very good, my little lady," replied our youth; "but sometimes people do return even from wars, do they not?"

"Oh! yes; my own ancestors often did. But I thought

you might return sooner still ; because Rabbi Eleazar said that the persons who took the money from this house were not the persons who would take it home—that is, to where it was bound, and that is to the war. But it seems you are to take it all the way. My grandfather does not know what I have just whispered you,” added she, returning, and speaking in a lower voice ; “ shall I tell him before all these persons ? ”

“ On no account,” answered Paulus, in a whisper ; “ it might lead to an immediate struggle. I have formed my own plan. Fear nothing, my good and kind little lady. I am safe, I believe, and I shall never forget *you*.”

At this assurance, and the emphasis with which it was spoken, a sort of crimson fell like a light over Esther’s face. She stood musing for a moment, and said :

“ Then I will wait up for grandfather, whose room is next to mine, and tell him, as he passes, that I have mentioned the facts to you. Farewell ! ”

She now withdrew altogether, and Cassius Chærias, who had, in spite of himself, overheard a part of the singular and mysterious conference, gazed hard at Paulus. But the latter stood, with his eyes bent abstractedly on the floor, calm, impassive, and impenetrable. Chærias could gather nothing to solve the enigma.

By hard work the reckoning and the packing of the treasure were finished considerably before daybreak ; whereupon Paulus received the key of the chest, and gave in exchange to Eleazar a receipt in full, signed with his own name, witnessed by Thellus, Chærias, and Longinus, and sealed with the signet of Germanicus Cæsar.

A sneering and malignant expression in the Jew's face struck Paulus, and the Jew saw that he saw it.

"You can't remove this now," said the Jew, composing his features with nervous rapidity.

"No," said Paulus; "and we have had fatigue enough for one night. There are couches and cushions in this room; we must trouble you to turn it into a sleeping apartment for the next four hours, and to leave us the key."

In ten minutes the numerous attendants had made all the arrangements requisite for this purpose, and Eleazar, taking up a lamp to retire, said, in a tone of sentimentality, intended for sentiment:

"This is a memorable chamber, honored sirs. Here Julius Cæsar, time and again, held wild orgies in his boyhood. Here Catiline and he, and a numerous convivial band, of whom Cæsar was much the youngest, played many a strange prank."

"What!" cried Paulus, in amazement; "Cæsar frequent this quarter of Rome, Cæsar live in the Suburra!"

"Certainly," quoth Thellus, yawning.

"When a boy, yes," observed Chærias.

"This was his very house in those days," pursued the Jew. "My father, who was one of the many thousands of my nation brought hither as hostages from Jerusalem by Pompey the Great, often told me that he had seen Julius Cæsar more than once in the room we are now standing in. Pompey, of course, had selected the wealthiest families to carry away, and my father lent money over and over again to Julius Cæsar."

"Was your father," asked Chærias, with a sneer,

"ever paid? Was he paid, I pray you, by the choragus of that convivial crew?"

"Not till after the battle of Pharsalia," answered Eleazar, "when indeed he had long ceased to look for the money. It was, however, then paid, valiant sir, and the interest of it was paid also."

"Ah!" returned Chærias, "the hem of the garment was wider than the garment, I wager."

The Jew here moved toward the door.

"Before you go, good Eleazar," said Paulus, "give us another interesting piece of information. I am taking this treasure from your house, am I not?"

"Yes, most honored sir; it looks very like it."

"Why did you say I should never take it to its destination?"

"I say that? Never!"

"Your scrivener's grandchild has told me that she heard you say that it was not those who took the money from here who would take it to its destination."

Eleazar's active mind was not quite quick enough for this abrupt emergency; and he certainly looked more than usually ugly before he replied. But recovering himself, he said:

"My scrivener's little grandchild is so bright that she catches broken lights upon the numberless points of a whimsical, myriad-faced, and diamond-like intelligence. What I stated was, that those who took the money from this house would be only the messengers of those who were to take it to its destination."

And with this pretty bit of semi-oriental rhetoric, he bowed and left them.

A curious quarter of an hour ensued, when the four emissaries found themselves at last alone.

Said Paulus, "I want some sleep; let us take our several couches, and prepare for to-morrow."

"This Jew has provided us," observed Chærias, "with really good wine; none of your *vinum doliare*. Before we sleep, one cyathus round!"

While Cassius Chærias poured out four portions of the wine, Paulus shrugged his eyebrows, Thellus his shoulders, and Longinus the decurion looked upon the operation with an impassive countenance. When they had each drunk their respective measures, Cassius Chærias turned up his sagum, and bared his right arm.

"That is the arm," said he, "which, last year,* cleared a road for me, with the short Roman sword, through thousands of opposing mutineers. Come, Longinus—TRY ARMS!!"

And he planted his elbow on the table, and seized in his right hand the readily-offered hand of the decurion. Severe was the struggle. The central vein in each man's forehead came out into view; their lips were compressed; their feet were steadied strongly upon the floor; their shoulders quivered, and—after a doubtful period of nearly three minutes—down with a crash went the knuckles of Longinus upon the elm table.

"Now for the next," said Chærias.

"Do you mean to challenge *me*?" quoth Paulus.

"Even so," said Chærias, with an amicable smile.

The ensuing struggle was much more severe than the

* An anachronism of two or three years, with which the historian can reproach the novelist.

last. Cassius Chærias was considerably older than Paulus; but Paulus had been trained in the Athenian *Pancratia*, and it was impossible for the energy and muscular power of Chærias to break down the scientific resistance of his youthful opponent, nor could Paulus pretend to bend back by main force the mighty arm of the famous centurion. Indeed, Paulus had, throughout, a downward but yet an unconquered arm. Again and again Chærias threw his whole vigor into the effort, panting and gasping; and each time Paulus, who had never opened his lips during the struggle, smiled at the end of it.

"You cannot do it, can you, Chærias?" cried Thel-lus, who also was smiling.

"Well, scarcely," said Chærias; "in fact, I cannot. But *you* would be just as powerless."

A laugh met this, that was not unlike the laugh with which Paulus, a few days before, had greeted Claudius's panic-stricken deprecation of being selected to break the Sejan horse.

"As powerless!" cried the ex-gladiator; "why, you have had the best of it against our chick here; who, when he comes to his plenary powers, will have the best of it against us all. But you are speaking now to Thel-lus—I may have gone into a wrong calling, or, if it be allowable, I may yet have rashly chosen it; but, once upon the sands, I have walked them a king—give us your hand, and hold it up if you can."

Cassius Chærias—brave, handsome, youthful, and vigorous—seized the mighty hand proffered to him, and found his own arm instantly bent powerless back upon the table.

"I would not do that," said Thellus, "to young master Paulus, our present leader, for a hundred thousand sesterces. He must meet—he has to meet, alas! the mortifications of life; but I do not want to be, in his case, the early vehicle even of the least of them."

Paulus bowed to Thellus, and said, smiling: "I have known a few already; and it would be no shame to be beaten by you in vigor, valor, or skill."

Chærias rose, stared, frowned, and laughed. He marched up and down the room once or twice, and then exclaimed:

"Why, Thellus, what an infernal establishment the arena must be! Such men as you ought not to be sucked into that kind of vortex."

Thellus, though smiling, heaved a sigh. "Come, friends," cried Paulus, moving to the centre of the large chamber, "enough of pastime. We have work to do. Sit round me here, in the middle of this room, while I tell you something. Walls, you know, have ears."

Forthwith his three companions brought cushions and placed them near the settle which he had set down in the middle of the apartment, and, sitting before him, waited for his communication.

"Yonder beautiful grandchild of the uncanny-looking Jew's poor clerk or scrivener," said Paulus in a low tone, almost a whisper, after a moment or two of reflection, "not only made one or two singular disclosures in the remarks you all heard, but whispered to me a very serious fact."

Here Cassius Chærias, whose curiosity had been already much spurred, appeared the very embodiment

of attention. But all were keenly attentive. Paulus pursued :

"Learn, then, that in this queerly built or queerly arranged house there is, at this moment, a crowd of men of dangerous and debauched appearance, and doubtless of desperate disposition ; some of them, friend Thellus, men who have been in the arena. Nor is this all. They have comrades outside, watching our ten soldiers."

Longinus uttered that low-whispered whistle by which some men express the cool appreciation of a sudden calamity.

"Twelve millions of sesterces, my friends," continued Paulus, "are to many men hereabouts an object of great interest. I am certain that we are to be attacked on the road, and yonder chest is to be taken from us. While here, or in Rome, first the Jew's own safety is our hostage, and next, Lucius Piso's government of the city will be our safety. But once we are on the road, the Jew calculates on a part of the booty as a reward for betraying us, to be got out of the robbers themselves—while he looks to recover the whole money and interest for it, all the same, from the *Ærarium Sanctum*, in the end."

"We have twelve good horses," said Longinus, "and might outstrip the villains."

"So will *they* have horses," answered Paulus, "and no iron chest or wagon to clog their pace. The speed of a column is the speed of its slowest part ; and then what can fourteen men do against seventy ? You are aware that the army, except stationary Prætorians and an Urban Guard, of which Lucius Piso would not lend us a

man beyond the walls, has gone north; and there is not another soldier to be found at our disposal in all Rome. What advice do you give?"

The conjuncture was obviously serious. They had "tried arms" in play. They were now to try wits in earnest.

Paulus's counsellors advised one course and another. 1. *To wait*:—but the difficulty would wait also. 2. *To send to Germanicus for a larger escort*:—but time pressed, and the treasure was wanted by Germanicus at once. 3. *To announce that they were to be met, twenty miles from Rome, by more soldiers—or, that they would start the day after the next at dawn, whereas they should start early the night before.* Neither of these plans would avail, for they would be too closely watched.

These were the devices of ready and well-exercised, but ordinary, soldiers. Paulus shook his head, smiling, and then gave his orders.


"After an hour or two of sleep," said he, "we will roll and carry this wheel-chest straight down to our stables. There we must lock ourselves in with old Philip. We will then and there unpack and empty the chest: the gold we must next repack, as best we can, in some corn-bags, to be placed under several of the many bundles and trusses of hay which we must carry for the use of our horses on the road, cording the bags roughly, but strongly and securely. We must, when this is done, *unpave a portion of the stable*, and mixing the stones with rubbish, to prevent them from rattling when shaken, we must repack the chest with that sort of treasure. To get stones from anywhere else outside the stable, and convey them thither, would excite, first, attention, then

curiosity, and finally a suspicion, if not a sure inference, of our whole design. After these measures we will set out, leaving Philip to keep possession of the stable, and to prevent any person whatever (who might notice the displacement of the paving-stones) from entering it for a couple of days ; which time past, he can follow us. The chest is one, you perceive, which, without the key, would take iron crowbars many hours to break open, and steel saws as many to bite through—the lock being both cunning as a lock and the strongest part of the whole fabric. Our pursuers will not think of crowbars or of steel saws ; and the key I will fling into the first water or wood we meet after starting. When we are overtaken—or if we be—you must at first make a show of fighting, and leave the rest to me.”

His three companions highly applauded this plan, and they and he lay down on cushions round the chest, one on each of its four sides, to take a short and very necessary slumber. They soon awoke, and began to execute, point by point, the scheme of young Paulus Lepidus *Æmilius*.



CHAPTER III.

“E have made more than fifty miles, and the pursuers do not appear,” said Paulus.

Longinus was holding for his superior the bridle of the famous horse of which Tiberius Cæsar had made a present to the breaker of him. Chærias and Thellus were standing on each side of our youth, who had dismounted; and all three, shading their eyes with their hands from a dazzling Italian moon at full, were looking along the straight backward road. Two wagons were in front, or behind them, as they now stood watching; the soldiers had unharnessed the six horses of one of them—that in the rear—upon which the heavy iron chest was borne, and were letting them drink from a roadside spring; the other wagon, drawn also by six horses, and laden with corn-bags, and hay at the bottom, and various packages and soldiers’ cumber above, was moving forward at a walk, conducted by two soldiers, who rode the two horses in the middle.

High banks on each hand lined at that point the Roman road, which led to the northeast of Italy, and these banks were densely clothed with copse-wood, which in certain places thickened into an impenetrable jungle.

“Do any of you see anything?” inquired Paulus, when he found no one disposed to answer his remark.

A few moments of silent watching followed, when Longinus, the decurion, said: “I *see* nothing, centu-

tion; but I *hear* something—the distant beat of hoofs upon this hard and echoing road.”

Paulus at once cried to the men conducting the hay-wagon in front (that is, behind them, as they then were facing round) to drive forward steadily, but to take care not to blow the horses until followed by the rearward wagon, when they were to rush forward at the top of their speed, and to continue at that pace. He next ordered the two soldiers who were giving water to the horses of the other wagon in the rear, in which was the chest, to reharness them quickly, and as soon as a body of mounted men should appear on the road behind, and should have them plainly in sight—but not sooner—to push their horses into a gallop, yet to make sure of not gaining upon the wagon in front, but, beginning as late as possible, to continue their gallop only about a thousand paces, and then to walk. Lastly, he turned to the six remaining soldiers, and bade them draw their short swords, loosen their shields, and prepare for action. Upon which he clapped his hand upon the emerald hilt of his own very differently-shaped weapon, whipped it out of the scabbard, and, springing upon the back of Sejanus (or, more properly, of the Sejan steed), he said:

“Thellus, stand upon my right hand, a little further, so as to give me room; my weapon is made for cutting as well as thrusting. Chærias and Longinus, stay on my left hand. Let us see whether we can keep this narrow road awhile against all who may come.”

By this time the clatter from the southwest of galloping hoofs upon the hard road had become audible to all.

"Legionaries of the fourth centuria!" cried Paulus, turning round, "away from the road into the brush-wood on either hand, three each side. Get before us, as we face now, a few yards."

The Roman legionaries vanished silently to execute this order, and crept through the copse on either hand of the highway. Meantime the hay-wagon trotted steadily forward, and the other remained stationary, ready for an *apparently* panic-sticken gallop.

Presently came forward, with rattle of hoofs and clang of metal, and with the play of the moonlight upon armor, a column of mounted men, every one of whom had on his face a linen mask—not the mask used in comedies. The column filled the width of the road. Fronting them like a statue, in the middle of the way, stood the colossal chestnut horse, and like a statue sat young Paulus on his back.

The riders pulled hard and stopped a few yards from him, when their leader called out:

"Young centurion, no affectation or hypocrisy is required. Eleazar has—perish my tongue! I was going to say that I know you to be a youth of precocious prudence. It is best to speak out what we mean and what we want. You are conveying a large treasure to the army in Venetia; we must have every sesterce of it."

Paulus looked, and saw that the wagon laden with the iron chest had just departed in well-acted terror at a gallop.

"Take it, then," said he. "We have been careful and sparing of the horses, and it is only now we have pushed them into a gallop; and I entertain a hope that we shall hold you at bay so long upon this road that

the chest will have reached Germanicus Cæsar before you—I am wrong; I mean to leave *you* here upon the ground—before your followers, I say, can accomplish two-thirds of the distance.”

“Demented youth!” replied the other, “why resist without the hope of success? We are ten to one. We can, besides, send men into the copse on each side of the road, and in a moment they will be in your rear.”

“You fifty men on the right,” cried Paulus, “and you fifty on the left, select three of your best javelin throwers each side, and, after I have ridden back from the midst of yonder gang, give them a sample of what you can do.”

He made his horse bound as he faced the column between Thellus, on the one hand, and Chærias and Longinus, on the other.

“Now,” said he, shaking his long rapier aloft, “I have a great mind to ride through the whole of you and back again for the mere sport of it. Your horses are like cats compared to mine; you are only fourteen deep, and the beast that bears me, even if mortally wounded, would trample down fifty of you in file before he dropped.”

The leader of the pursuing band was a shrewd man. After a moment’s consultation with the persons on either side of him, he said:

“It is a bold idea, young centurion. If it deceived us, you could march away unattacked. But we counted you leaving Rome; we know for certain that you were only fourteen men, all told; we have a post of two men more than forty miles ahead of you, who would have returned and joined us if any reinforcement had met or

was coming to meet you. We seriously mean to have yonder treasure, therefore listen to good sense. You might kill and wound a few of us, but not a man of your own party would survive, and we should get the chest afterward all the same. You will lose your life, yet not save the treasure. That will not be disinterestedness, but madness."

"In answer to that," said Paulus, who had no objection to prolong the parley, "I must remind you of your own singular disinterestedness. You will lose your own life in order that those behind you may enjoy the money. You must love them more than you love yourself; for I swear to you that, if it comes to violence, not a sesterce in the chest will *you*, at least, receive. The dead divide no booty. If you have authority, then, over your followers, order them back, and begone yourself."

At these words a cry arose from the crew of desperate men behind.

"No orders for us; we are all equals here!" And once voice added: "It will be no bad thing if some of us do get killed; those who survive will each have more of the money." And a loud laugh greeted this sally.

Paulus hesitated. A downright wish to fight, and a strong repugnance to obey, even in appearance, mandates such as theirs, yielded, however, to prudence, and to the conviction that the proper moment for a struggle would come only when the robbers should attempt, if they should attempt this at all, to take the wagon containing the hay (wherein the treasure was concealed) as well as that which carried the iron chest filled with stones, to which they were welcome. Having, therefore, played out his little comedy, he now said:

"Had I not a message of vital importance to give to Germanicus Cæsar, which forbids me to throw away my life till I have fulfilled the errand, I would rather be slain where we stand than comply. But I call upon you, Thellus, and you, Longinus and Chærias, to bear witness that we yield only to overwhelming and irresistible odds. Ten men cannot withstand seventy. Be pleased to move aside, and let these riders come forward. I will gallop on with them and overtake the chest. Bring with you the legionaries in the copse after us, and follow at a fast run. We may need you after all, should these new friends prove too unreasonable."

"We shan't prove unreasonable. You pay us too well for that," retorted the leader of the robbers.

Meanwhile Thellus, Chærias, and Longinus had stepped to the side of the road, and Paulus had turned his horse around. He forthwith rode off at a furious gallop, which soon left far behind him the cloud of straining pursuers.

"Was not that neatly done?" said Thellus, in a low voice, to Chærias. "I did not think our chick-chick was such a play-actor."

"He is a splendid lad," said the centurion. "But come, no time is to be lost. These villains may want to take both the wagons, and we must all die on the road, rather. I am in command, I think. Legionaries, come down from the copse, and follow us at a run."

And the three friends, with the six legionaries behind them, started at a sort of sling-trot, which every Roman soldier was obliged to practice in the various gymnasiums attached to the Roman camps.

Considerably more than a thousand paces forward,

they heard an uproar of voices, and saw the freebooters in the act of turning the wagon which contained the iron chest. The other wagon was far in front, nearly out of sight, indeed; and, as they afterwards learnt, would by this time have been so altogether, only for the restiveness of one of the horses, which had cost the drivers several minutes.

Paulus had a design in galloping so furiously, and obtaining so great a lead of the freebooters. The moment he overtook the drivers of the rearward van, who, according to orders, were now going at a walk, he directed them to cut the traces, to set free two of the horses, and then to ride forward on two of the remaining horses, and join the escort of the other vehicle. This measure had several effects: first, there would be a fresh delay occasioned, and each delay increased the distance which was now growing between the pursuers and the treasure; secondly, the escort, and, if requisite, the locomotive power immediately attached to the gold, would be increased; thirdly, the vehicle containing the chest needed six, or at the least four, of those small horses, to be drawn with anything like the speed indispensable to the safety of the plunderers, none of whom, until they had deliberated, would be likely to part with their own steeds, considering the chance of pursuit, or the chance that their accomplices might leave them behind, and divide the treasure without them. But a far more important effect than any of these was contemplated by Paulus in the whole operation of separating his two vehicles, and this effect soon appeared. When Chærias, Longinus, and Thellus, with the six legionaries, came up, they found the robbers in great disorder

and uproar, endeavoring to turn the wagon, nearly half of them having dismounted, and working with their own hands. Paulus, on his tall steed, was conspicuous a little beyond the further verge of the crowd, and was holding an angry dispute with the chief who had first addressed him.

"You looked so formidable," said he, in a low voice and with a haughty smile, "as you came thundering after me along the road, that I do not at all wonder the two soldiers should have sought their safety in flight, and, in order that they might fly effectually, should have taken the two horses with them."

"That one, at all events," said the other, "which you are riding, must be instantly harnessed."

"We must mend these traces as best we can."

"Here's another set of traces in the cart itself!" shouted one of the robbers.

"Good!" said the leader. "Some two or three of us must harness our own horses to the vehicle, besides yonder chestnut steed. We can ride them all the same. No man need walk, for *that*. Now, my master," added he, turning once more to Paulus, "dismount, and give me the key of this chest."

"The key is not in my possession," replied Paulus; "but I can tell you where it is."

"Where, then? and quickly!"

"Please to remember," said Paulus, "that you have obtained possession of that chest by convention, by agreement. We might have made you pay a dear price for it. Therefore, before I tell you where the key is, let my men pass. It was to spare *them* that I gave up the chest."

"By all the gods!" cried the leader furiously, "they shall never pass till we know where the key is. It would take many strong men hours of hard work to break open this box with crowbars, or cut it with steel saws."

Paulus perceived that Chærias and the two decurions, followed by the six soldiers, had quietly and swiftly sprung into the copse which still lined the road, and were working their way round to where he rode.

He said, "A good locksmith in Rome would soon make you a key."

"Are you courting a needless death?" roared the other. "I am very likely to let a Roman locksmith see this! Once and for all, where is the key?"

By this time some of the freebooters, who had ridden after and caught the two stray horses, had harnessed these and two of their own to the wagon, and the two men who had parted with their own had now mounted the leaders. One of them here called out, "Cut him down if he don't tell us where to find the key. We may have troops upon us before we can take this money to a safe place and divide it."

Paulus made his horse bound a few paces away. Chærias and his companions sprang into the road, and passing Paulus, who had faced round again toward the robbers, resumed at his command their vigorous slinging run along the highroad in the original direction of the march.

"Listen to me," cried Paulus to the robbers. "Time is more precious to you than you are aware. My men are now safe, and I'll tell you where the key is. But, first, let me advise those of you who drive the wagon to

move on with it fast; and, if they can leave some of their comrades behind, they will evidently have more of what is in the box to divide among themselves. On the other hand, any of you who may wish to abandon his share in the box has only to come out here after me, and so lose the brief time of security. If no more than *three* of you come out at once, some of them will doubtless lose something else besides time; if any greater number come, let them each catch me."

Cries of "The key! the key!" interrupted him.

"The key of that chest," he resumed, "is lying as far as I could fling it in the forest on the roadside, either to the right or to the left, not fifty miles from Rome. Farewell!"

As he said this in a loud voice, he slowly turned Sejanus, and trotted him in pursuit of his running companions. Some of the robbers believed they could find the key upon his person. A shower of javelins followed him, all of which, except three, missed. One glanced against the back of his helmet; two others stuck in the small rings of a steel shirt. At the same time the rattle of hoofs behind him warned him that he was pursued. He turned half-round on his saddle-cloths, exclaiming, as he increased his pace, "Right! Lose your part in yonder box, which is even now trotting off. Come with me, my masters, and let the others have the chest. Come along!"

They did not mean to take this advice, however much they would have desired to punish him for his trick respecting the key, as well as for his defiant and jeering tone. In spite of momentary anger, the great majority of the freebooters were in excellent humor and the wild-

est spirits. Their work had been short; their success, as they supposed, perfect; and there was money enough now in their possession to give them more than the value of six thousand dollars each. The great majority of them, in fact, felt literally unable to tear themselves away from the iron box containing twelve millions of sesterces; and this division of their number, and consequent diminution of their combatant power, were the very objects which Paulus had had in view when separating by so wide an interval his two vehicles. Had it become necessary to defend the one in advance, he felt sanguine and even certain that he should have had only a part of the enemy to resist, and even this part would not long continue an attack which might give their accomplices time to divide the spoil in their absence.

Five men, however, among whom was their leader, had dashed forth from the mass of riders to wreak the anger of the moment upon the scoffer.

Paulus, going at an easy canter, his face turned back, saw that they were not coming on abreast, their chief being the best mounted, and the four others straggling after him as if in a race. He pressed Sejanus for about a hundred and fifty yards, and, finding now that there was a sufficient interval between the leading pursuer and his followers, pulled up abruptly, and wheeled round.

"I have no need and no wish," he cried, as his long rapier flashed above his charger's head in a wide lateral sweep from left to right, "to take your life, but you shall carry a marked face to your grave!"

It was not a very violent cut, but measured with great

exactness, and delivered with half-force. There was blood on the three-edged sword as it came away. The man yelled. The next pursuer pulled up in haste to let the third join him; and in the mean time Paulus, who had passed the leading robber on that gentleman's right-hand, now made a curve across the whole road in returning, and flew by him at full speed on the opposite side, where the poor caitiff would have had to strike or thrust across his own bridle. He made an awkward attempt to do the former, but was, of course, short of his chas-tiser, who continued his course until he overtook Cassius Chærias and the others, still running steadily along the road.

Here, looking back, he perceived that his pursuers had given up the chase, and were using their best speed to rejoin the main body, who (some before and some behind the precious van) could be seen travelling away in the distance at a vigorous trot.

"Stop a moment," cried Paulus, dismounting; "take breath now."

And Chærias, the two decurions, and the soldiers all stopped, and gathered round the young centurion. The four officers burst simultaneously into a hearty laugh, and their mirth rather surprised the grim legionaries, who conceived that to have just lost twelve million sesterces of military pay was no laughing matter.

While Thellus picked out of our hero's shoulders the two javelins still sticking in the steel shirt, he said in a low voice:

"Young master and friend, had you not better ride forward fast? It is not well to leave those weighty corn-bags too long in the charge of common soldiers."

"You are right, my friend. I will do so. Chærias, I must overtake the other vehicle. Bring all our friends here quickly after me. Fellow-soldiers, you must sustain your severe pace for a few hours or so longer. At every milestone you must change the run to a quick walk until quite in breath again."

And remounting, he galloped forward. It was in a part of the road perfectly level with the land around, under bright starlight, the moon having set, that he came up with the four soldiers who were escorting the baggage-cart. They were halting. The linchpin of one of the front wheels had given way, the wheel had wobbled off the axletree, and the legionaries were even then busy in endeavoring to manufacture a temporary fastening. In other respects all was not well. Two of the horses had fallen lame. To maintain a forced pace was no longer possible. When the wheel had been replaced in a rude fashion, Paulus directed his men to move forward gently, at a walk, until they should be rejoined by the nine others belonging to their little expedition; and while riding quietly in their rear, and affecting to hum an air of music which was then popular in Greece, and used to be played by ladies upon the seven-stringed lyre, he considered with no little anxiety and carefulness, was it possible that the freebooters should find out the contents of the strong-box and return in pursuit?

First, it was certain that they would not go all the way back to Rome; they would not dare to take their cumbrous and conspicuous prize into the city at all. They must already have halted; and it was likely that, making their way off the highroad into the forest, they

would have deposited the chest in some safe dell or dingle. Secondly, however, it was not probable they could open the chest by any forcible means for many hours. This thought was a relief. But suddenly an alarming idea occurred to him. Eleazar had betrayed him; would not Eleazar be sufficiently cunning to anticipate—not perhaps the removal of the money out of the chest, but the easy and obvious artifice of concealing the key? The delay which could be caused by the want of a key might enable a well-mounted rider to fetch from the rear guard of Germanicus's army a strong escort, and to lead it back in time to recover the booty; and *might not Eleazar possess a duplicate key?* Might he not have followed his accomplices, and meeting them on their return, have produced the means which they desired but lacked of opening the box? Then would a discovery be made which would convince the band that Paulus retained the treasure still; they would remember there was a second wagon; they would follow him again; he had not yet made a hundred miles, and now, with these lame horses, he could no longer fly fast. His difficulties, risks, and responsibilities became so acutely painful to the young man, that he clinched his hands involuntarily and groaned aloud.

After a time, looking back along the road, he saw Chærias and the others in the distance following swiftly. He turned his horse around, and awaited them. There were some wines and other provisions in the cart, and he determined to call a halt, afford his men the refreshments which their severe exertions had rendered so needful, and consult with his three friends.

Distributing to the legionaries bread, meat, and wine, he ordered them to give the horses a feed of corn in nosebags, and then to go back along the road, beyond hearing; to keep attentive watch for any sign of pursuit; to take a repast, and to rest until further orders.

When these things had been done, and when the soldiers were out of hearing, our youth and his three companions took their seats upon the corn-bags in the wagon; and while eating some bread and meat and grapes, and passing round a horn of wine, Paulus laid the subject of his anxiety before the others. They agreed with him as to the gravity of the disastrous possibility impending over them; and Longinus, who was very modest, seeing that neither Chærias nor Thellus proffered a word, said:

“Centurions, we left Rome, you know, by the *Via Nomentana*; we have made about a hundred thousand paces; we are now not far from the *Lake Thrasymene*, of evil fame. I know this country well. Not six hundred paces from the road, on the right-hand, there is an ancient bosky dingle or hollow. It was, I think, formerly a quarry, from which many thousand paces of this very road were paved. It is now lined all round with copse and brushwood. I recommend that we take the wagon through the fields into that dell, where it will remain concealed completely, as it will be much below the level of the surrounding country. At the brink of the dell we can unharness the horses, which some of the men can mount and ride off upon. There are provisions enough for three or four days for three of us. We will let the wagon roll down to a ledge in the concave of the dingle. The centurion Chærias,

Thellus and myself will remain on guard, and lead the forester's life for a day or two or three. You, who are so well mounted, can ride as fast as possible to the camp of Germanicus, near Forum Alieni, and bring back a sufficient escort, say fifty men, and we will await your return."

"You have touched it with the point of a needle," cried Paulus.

"It is good advice," added Chærias, "in *substance*. But we had better not leave *wheel-marks through the fields*. Let us ourselves carry the corn-bags, as well as the provisions, into the dell. Let the wagon, the weight of which will be enormously lightened after the coin is removed, proceed forward. The horses can then bear it swiftly; and all the ten soldiers can have a conveyance, two on horseback, eight in the wagon; the two lame horses can be led by the mounted men; all six beasts will thus be preserved for future use. I don't like, when in war, losing an ass, or even the ear of an ass, that I can save."

"Nevertheless," returned Paulus, "we must not separate the conveyance too far from what it has to convey. Yours be the task of obliterating the wheel-marks, not all the way to the dell, but near the road. I may be able to bring back soldiers, yet not to bring another wagon. Therefore we will forthwith carry Longinus's plan into effect. It is impossible to say how soon it might be too late."

Without calling to the soldiers, who were a hundred yards off in their rear, and were enjoying their supper, Paulus tied his horse's head to a tree, and, with the vigorous help of his three companions, soon saw removed

into the dingle, to which Longinus led the way, the wagon and the whole of the treasure concealed in the tightly-strapped corn-bags.

At the brink of the hollow, Paulus had unharnessed the horses, and led them back to the road. He now summoned the ten legionaries, told them to ride in turn, four at a time, for some miles, leading the lame horses. They were then to tether the animals where there was good grass, some fifty yards from the roadside, and continue their own march on foot to Cortona, and there they were to wait until they heard from him again.

They set forth obediently at a good round pace. But Paulus, on his mighty steed, which was now fed and refreshed, was to follow and to pass them, and was to be the first messenger of the emergency. Nevertheless, he could not yet move nor tear himself away. He looked in the direction of the dell, where all was quiet and nothing visible. He looked forward, where he saw his men fast disappearing in the uncertain starlight. He looked back, where he could hear and see nothing but the dim landscape, nothing but physical nature. At last, with a deep breath, he poised himself well upon the back of Sejanus, shook the reins over the brute's powerful neck, and departed. The horse, as if he understood the long and heavy strain that was to be put upon his resources, seemed to exercise a sort of economy, and, without bounding into the full fury of his speed, settled down into a long and steady stride which soon carried him abreast of the legionaries. Paulus here drew reins, and said :


“ You can tether the horses hereabouts, and leave them to graze. Then come on at a good pace, my men ;

there may be pursuers behind. I ride forward on purpose to bring help back. Halt at Cortona ; apply at the Quæstor for your lodgings and subsistence, and on my return from Ferrara, I will pick you up."

And he went forward at an easy canter, with the dark waters of Thrasymentis upon his left-hand. Cortona was considerably to the left of the straight line as the crow flies ; but, taking this direction, he calculated upon striking the Apennine chain, where there was an easy pass, familiar to him since early boyhood from the military lectures of his father, who used to point out to the child upon a diagram the exact spot, beyond Fiesole and near Pistoja, where Hannibal had led his army across those mountains. He therefore held on, within Etruria, passed through Florence, where but few persons were yet out of bed ; left Fiesole on his right, and reached Pistoja a little after noon. He had spared his charger ; and he performed the eighty miles from a point somewhat below Lake Thrasymentis in about seven hours. Here he halted to give both himself and his beast refreshments and some two hours of rest. He then passed the mountains, and rode off to the northeast, by Claterna and Bologna, along the road to Ferrara.



CHAPTER IV.

OONER was the protection of her son Paulus's presence removed than the Lady Aglais determined to avail herself of the cordial hospitality and opportune retreat which had been proffered to her and to Agatha by their aged kinsman, Marcus Lepidus Æmilius, who was now living in such systematic obscurity, although his energy had once stridden abreast of gigantic enterprises, and had shared, with two rivals only, the dominion of the world.

Aglais, with the aid of Crispus and Crispina, took her plans to escape notice, and to leave no trace of her destination when she should have departed from the inn. Yet, in spite of the astuteness of the Greek lady and the prudence of her allies, events proved that both an enemy and a friend respectively had been playing a far deeper game against her and in defence of her.

The distinguished soldier and still extant author, who, as the reader will remember, secured the wanderers a reception in Crispus's inn the night of their arrival, had once afterward called upon them. During that visit Aglais could not fail to be struck by something unusually ardent (for so self-possessed and courtly a person as Velleius Paterculus) in the tone of his inquiries after Agatha's health and spirits.

Now, the evening before the intended departure of the ladies to Marcus's castle, Crispina entered their sitting-room, and brought a request from the military tribune in question that they would favor him with a short in-

terview. Crispina was ordered to show him the way to their apartments; and in a few minutes he entered, holding his military casque in his left hand, and bowing low. The door being closed, Velleius having taken a seat, and a few courteous inquiries of the usual sort having been interchanged, he said :

“ So you would leave us to-morrow ? ”

They were very much surprised. He smiled, and continued :

“ You have good cause to change your residence ; and if you could reach the ex-triumvir’s castle at Monte Circello, without the positive certainty existing that you had taken refuge there, the place has hiding resources which would, I think, frustrate any direct search after you or after your lovely daughter. Once, during the civil wars, your brother-in-law, Marcus Lepidus, successfully eluded pursuit in the same immense edifice. It is the work of a Greek architect, and is a masterpiece of structural ingenuity. The whole building, at the time to which I allude, was methodically searched ; an account was rendered of every cubic foot within it, under it, and around it, but the triumvir was not discovered, and when times had mended, he negotiated for his own permanent immunity and security. If you were once within those walls, *while any doubt remained whither you had fled*, I should feel no further anxiety for you, lady, or for this fair damsel.” And he bowed gravely to Agatha.

After musing a little, Aglais said : “ You fill me with astonishment, and make me acquainted with new alarms. Why should we not reach Circello ? And why should not that home shelter us ? What, too, have we done ? ”

"You cannot," replied Paterculus slowly, "mistake the only end I have in view, if I am forced to alarm you. I am ready to do much, and, believe me, to hazard not a little, for your safety. You would not have arrived at Monte Circello at all, had I left you to execute your plans. You would have been waylaid."

"Waylaid!" she said, white with terror. "We will not stir. I will send for my son."

"Alas!" said Paterculus, "it will not be safe for you to stay in this inn two days longer. I have come to submit to you the only plan which I have been able to devise. You must not reject it."

She tried in vain to utter something, and could only gaze in speechless dismay at her visitor. The gentleness of his words and the consummate quietude of his bearing, as he immediately endeavored to reassure her, produced the desired effect, and at the same time drew the hearts of both the mother and daughter with an irresistible and natural feeling of gratitude and even tenderness toward one whom they regarded as their sole present champion amid vague dangers and nameless enemies and undefined horrors.

Instinctively the two poor women rose together, and, approaching Velleius, sat down near him.

"My time," said he, with a scarcely audible sigh, "runs fast away. Listen to such a letter as your kinsman at Circello might write to you." And he drew forth from a fold in his tunic the draft of a letter, and read as follows:

"M. Lep. Æmilius to his sister Aglais, greeting: I rejoice that you see the force of my reasoning, and that you will adopt the advice conveyed to you in my last

communication. The vessel which I have hired to take you to Spain, where you can live in tranquillity, will hover off the coast near Caietæ, in about a fortnight. I will, on the seventh day from this, send you a person who shall conduct you by Fondi to Caietæ, and take you to the ship in a small boat, when all shall be ready to receive you on board. Farewell."

Having read this, Paterculus paused. The ladies remained silent in sheer astonishment.

"But," said Aglais, at last, "there is no time left, if we are not safe here, to get my kinsman to write this letter."

"He need not write any letter," said Paterculus. "You observe in what I have just read an allusion to a supposed previous letter, which, nevertheless, he has not written. If you will merely consent to be guided by me, I will cause such a letter as the one of which you have now heard the draft to be intercepted on the way from the former triumvir to you. It will straightway be laid before a certain personage. That personage will see, or imagine he sees, that the triumvir is not only reluctant to receive you, but has succeeded in persuading you to change for an early flight to Spain your plan of a retreat or refuge in his castle. The personage to whom the letter will be carried will moreover notice that your change of measures has been produced by a former letter of Lepidus's, not intercepted, and therefore that the present seizure of communications has been made too late to prevent the relinquishment of your original design. He will, therefore, neither lay any ambush for you on the way to Circello, nor suspect that you have gone thither. If at the same time you disappear hence, he will await you at Caietæ, watching the

coast and the vessel, while you will be safe in the triumvir's castle."

"But the person of whom you speak will find that there is no vessel hovering on the coast," replied the lady, "and will again question whither we have gone."

"Pardon me for contradicting you," said Velleius. "He *will* find a vessel has been hovering on the coast, and, after receiving a skiff and its passengers on board (two women and one oarsman), that the vessel has vanished seaward. I have myself hired the vessel, distributed the parts, rehearsed the performers, and arranged all the scenes of the little comedy. But you must not go to-morrow, as you had intended, for on the way you would be seized. Give me to-morrow to have the letter intercepted, give me the next day to combine means for your journey. To-night, meanwhile, Crispus, and none other, must carry your luggage himself, parcel by parcel, into a thicket in the wood which skirts the western or seaward road. On the night of the day after to-morrow, you must leave the inn on foot, after people have retired to bed, and you must walk for a mile or more to the large sycamore-tree near the place where Cicero was murdered; Crispina will go with you to the spot through the garden, and then through the fields. Under the tree you will find a *biga* with two swift horses and a trusty driver; on the roof of the *biga* your luggage shall have been already strapped."

It would be needless to describe the gratitude of the mother and daughter. The former alluded deprecatingly to the expense which must have been incurred, especially in hiring such a vessel as would appear qualified to traverse the sea; but Paterculus checked all further reference to that matter with a peremptory gesture,

and, rising, added, in the same low voice in which the conversation had all along been carried on :

"I have alluded to the hiding resources of the Circello Castle. I will not describe the wonderful contrivances of the architect. He was your countryman—an Athenian even, I think. When once with Lepidus, you will see ; and as you remember—

‘Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.’”

"Well, but," said Aglais, "if you know so much of these lurking-places (*latebræ*), others doubtless know them, too."

"Not, so," answered Velleius, with a smile. "I am preparing the history of these times. I note and remember much which every one else dismisses from his mind, if remarked at all. There is one point very important to you: supposing you could have evaded any ambush laid for you to-morrow, and have reached Circello, yet so reached it that it would remain certain you had taken refuge there, then you would not be safe, because, although physically and materially all search of the place for a fugitive would be vain, a moral pressure upon Marcus Lepidus might, I apprehend, compel the surrender of his refugees by his own act."


"I understand," said Aglais, and simultaneously Agatha exclaimed "Oh!"

"Fair damsel," said Velleius, "he is not like his nephew, your brother, your dauntless Paulus."

"But," concluded the handsome tribune, "with the measures taken you can banish anxiety, and set yourselves at rest. Think sometimes of me. Farewell."

Before they could answer a word, he had gone.

CHAPTER V.

T was a stormy night in early winter, a few weeks afterward, that Marcus Æmilius Lepidus (still in conversation styled the triumvir where not wholly forgotten) had returned with Aglais and Agatha to his favorite sitting-room in the third story, after showing the wonders of his solitary castle to the widow of his warlike brother and to her child. It would require a book to itself to describe this mysterious masterpiece of architectural ingenuity, and another book to depict the almost Eastern luxury with which it had been furnished, when its proprietor determined to exchange the dangers of political ambition in a very dangerous age for the comforts of opulent obscurity.

“Are you tired?” asked the old man.

The ladies, both flushed with exercise, declared that their excursion had been delightful, the surprises of it astounding, and, if more was to be seen, they were ready and eager to see more.

“More!” said the triumvir, smiling. “If we spent every night for a month in similar explorations, you would still be liable to lose yourselves without great caution.”

The room was lighted by eight lamps, and a brazier diffused a comfortable warmth.

“Agatha,” said the old man, throwing himself upon a couch, “before I ask you to accompany yourself upon the six-stringed lyre in a Greek song, pray go to the curtains against the western wall, draw them back, open

the lattice behind, and tell me how the night looks upon the Tyrrhenian Sea."

"It looks stormy over the sea, uncle, and the waves are beating upon the rocks far down; the foam shines very white under faint stars; the wind is roaring among your towers; and a world of waters thunders below at the foundations of the castle, which trem—"

The voice of the young girl ceased, and Aglais, who stood warming her hands near the brazier, looked round and saw her nowhere.

"Why, brother," she cried, in utter bewilderment, "where is—*where* is Agatha?"

The triumvir arose, and approaching his sister-in-law, so as to stand between her and the window, pointed in the opposite direction significantly.

She turned, and endeavored to discover to what he wished to draw her attention, and while still gazing heard Agatha say, as if concluding her sentence:

"And do you not feel the floors vibrate to the shock of the unseen armies of the air?"

"Where have you been, Agatha?"

"Here, gazing at the wondrous tempest," said she, closing the horn shutter of the lattice, drawing the curtain, and coming back toward the fireplace, with her beautiful countenance one glow of poetry.

After the song which Lepidus had requested, supper was brought. Some tale of the civil wars and his adventurous youth was recalled accidentally to mind by Lepidus, and when he had finished it he begged Agatha once more to go to the window, and inform them again how the night looked over the sea.

She rose, ran to the curtains, and, drawing them

aside, uttered an exclamation, which drew her mother to the place.

The sea was gone, and the woods of Latium waved wanly and dimly in the gale under the uncertain stars. The triumvir joined them. "As you have so obligingly accompanied yourself, my child," said he, "upon the lyre, come now, you and your mother, and accompany *me*."

While he spoke, the lights, the brazier, and the whole apartment disappeared behind them. A monstrous shutter, running in grooves from ceiling to floor, had silently slipped along the space. The whole of that story of the house seemed to have pivoted *on a turn-table*. They were now in a little gallery, with no light save what entered by the lattice; and, looking through this, they thought the landscape appeared to glide away to the left, and the roaring sea to creep round under them from the right. When they were just over its mid-thunders they descended swiftly, till the spray blew into their faces. Then the triumvir shut the lattice, and at the same instant a flood of light fell from behind. Turning round, they saw in the centre of a wide-flagged passage a white-bearded servant, with a torch in each hand, bowing low, and inviting the ladies to follow him to the sitting-room. Marcus Lepidus gave an arm to the ladies on either hand, and for ten minutes, or even more, they followed the aged domestic up flights of stairs, round spacious halls, and along passages and colonnades, until the man stopped at a lofty door in the third story. Lepidus, opening the door, bowed his guests back into the room which they had quitted in so unexpected and unexplained a manner. A handsome, effem-

inate-looking youth, with traces of dissipation in his face, whom they had never seen before, sprang from Lepidus's favorite couch, and was presented in a constrained and even curt manner to the ladies by the triumvir—who had slightly started on perceiving him—as his grandson Marcus.

"Why, I did not expect you for six months yet," said the triumvir, dryly.

"Before explaining why you enjoy the pleasure of my company so soon," returned the youth, in a somewhat languid tone, which reminded Agatha of Velleius Paterculus's graceful slowness of accent, as a clever copy reminds one of an authentic masterpiece, or affected refinement of genuine elegance, "will you be good enough to inform me of the names of the fair ladies whom I have the unlooked-for pleasure of meeting?"

"My poor brother's widow, the Lady Aglais, and her daughter, your second cousin, Agatha," said the triumvir.

"Ah! then," cried he, making a low obeisance to each of the ladies in succession, "you are the mother, you the sister, of the heroic youth of whose prowess I have heard all men speak as I came through Formiæ, and whom I have missed meeting because he had just followed Germanicus to the war in North Italy; you are the mother and sister "*Ἐκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο*."

The two last words of the last line in the Iliad, so familiar to the Greek ladies, thus suddenly applied to young Paulus, in obvious allusion to his late victory over the Sejan horse, brought a flush of pleasure to their faces.

"I have come back from Rhodes," resumed the

young man, "a little sooner than had been arranged; first, because—because—if I had remained much longer, I must have been obliged to borrow money."

"Your studies, I am sure, will make you famous; but your allowance," said the triumvir, "was surely most liberal; a proconsul's son would not have wished more in my time."

"Just so, grandfather; but you say in your time. The times have changed; new wants have sprung up. I can't keep the pace. The boy Caligula, and young Herod Agrippa, my particular friends, were both at Formiæ when I arrived, and I pledge you my word I was ashamed to let them even know my presence; they would have laughed at me. No horses; no money; I could not have joined them. I skulked in an inn; and while the gayeties of a court, which is my natural sphere, were circling around me, was obliged to amuse myself by listening to some low seafaring man, in a state of partial intoxication, who was making people laugh by telling them that he had gained as much money for dressing up two boys in women's clothes, and rowing them in a skiff to his ship, off the coast at Caietæ, as if he had performed his intended voyage to Spain and back. When they asked for an explanation, he declared that, if they could keep a secret, so could he; but although his vessel was in the port at Naples, that it was good for him to be near a court, where men had the spirit to spend as much money on a freak or a whim as low people would venture on a trading voyage."

Agatha and Aglais exchanged glances. The triumvir was afraid to look toward them. He remarked that the seafaring churl was doubtless a swindler, pretending to

be tipsy and to have funds in order to lure some idler into playing at the *tesseræ* with him, and thus to win his money.

"I dare say," drawled the youth. "*I* want money, too, grandfather; and I know you will supply me sufficiently."

"Well, well," replied the triumvir, "you must be tired. Let me order you some supper, and recommend you to go at once to bed. To-morrow we shall speak of business."

Asking his grandson to follow him, he left the room, and shortly afterward returned alone.

He was in low spirits. He cautioned the ladies to say nothing about the contrivances for concealment which existed in the castle, and of which the youth had no real knowledge, but merely a mysterious memory from childish days, confounding the facts with notions of necromancy and enchantment. He added that it would be well for all purposes if Marcus should at once depart; and that he would accordingly somewhat strain his own plans in regard to the pecuniary demands of the youth.

Notwithstanding the liberal supply of money which this declaration intimated, young Marcus suddenly changed his mind; and for some days was not apparently in a hurry to tear himself entirely away from that bewitched abode. He went, indeed, to Formiæ, but soon returned with airs of importance, and indeed, of inquisitiveness, which awakened in the hearts of the sojourners there, inexpressible anxiety and an undefined alarm. He passed from marks of admiration for Agatha, poignantly displeasing to her, to studiously

careless questions, which sounded like the continuations of some conference which he must have held with mighty personages in a dangerous sphere. And it was then that he began regularly to go in the afternoons to Formiæ (where he slept), and to return for an hour or two nearly every forenoon to the castle of enchantment.

One day, toward noon, the triumvir was just coming home after a little fishing excursion, and having stepped from his boat upon a jetty which he had built to run out of the very courtyard of the mansion to an iron gate in the lofty sea-wall, he was about to cross the yard, separated from the garden by a paling, and so to enter the house at the usual door on the sea-side, when, over the pales, he saw the ladies sitting in an ivy-thatched arbor at the end of one of the garden-walks. Passing through a little wicket shutter in the paling, he sauntered toward them. As he approached, he perceived that Agatha was in tears and sobbing, while her mother, whose arms enfolded upon her own bosom the young girl's head, was endeavoring to soothe her.

Neither the Greek lady nor the weeping girl perceived the triumvir. How other hosts of Marcus Lepidus's age, and in circumstances resembling his, after a life like his, would have acted, I know not. But he paused, and, turning noiselessly, retraced his steps. Having entered the house, changed his fishing costume, and refreshed himself, he rested awhile in deep reflection. In less than an hour he sent a servant to order Melena, the Greek slave of Aglais, to announce to her mistress and to Agatha that he had returned, and would be glad to have their company at his repast in their favorite sitting-room on the third story. They came: and the three

sat down together to a delicious little banquet, at which the triumvir compelled both Aglais and Agatha to drink one cyathus more than they usually would drink of a wine the fame of which alone has reached us across all those centuries. The servants soon retired.

"Why are you so sad?" demanded the triumvir cheerily.

"I wish," said Agatha, "that we could hear, I do not say from, but even of, my brother Paulus."

"You will see him here before long, hardly able to bear up under the Pelion-upon-Ossa of his honors," said the old man.

"Ah!" groaned the young girl; while the Lady Aglais perceptibly suppressed a sigh. There was a pause.

"Has my grandson been here to-day?" asked Lepidus.

"He had not ridden off an hour," replied Aglais, "when Melena said you were waiting for us. I feel that our presence must be most embarrassing to you, dear brother; and it is not for us to increase willingly the troubles which we entail upon you. But I dread your grandson Marcus. He left us to-day with a threat."

"A threat!"

"Yes; you must have noticed—must have observed, that—that he has assumed a manner which——"

She hesitated.

"I have observed that he admires his cousin yonder, and that Agatha is far from encouraging his attentions," said Lepidus gravely. After a pause, he suddenly added: "Surely the young wretch has better reason than I have to know this; and has ceased to importune, to persecute

with marks of his preference, a damsel who is under my protection, to say nothing of Agatha's merits, birth, and breeding."

Neither of the ladies replied. Agatha became very red and Aglais very pale.

"What was the threat?" inquired the triumvir.

"He said," replied the mother, "that my daughter showed as much spirit as if she was in Spain, and he hoped she might display no abatement of it when Tiberius Cæsar should learn that she was yet in Italy."

"And who," roared the aged triumvir, "is Tiberius Cæsar? I have been the—the equal of his master."

His head drooped, and he added, in a mutter: "I have no legions now! Alas, we all helped to substitute caprice for justice when we lowered the Roman Senate into a court."

Aglais was in terror.

"Your bounty," said she, "together with the means I myself retain, places us beyond the fear of want. I have determined to seek concealment in a little villa or cottage near Rome; and, assuming a new name, there to await Paulus's return, and the result of Dionysius's efforts in our behalf. The sooner we depart, the safer."

"Let us neither run," said Lepidus, "into snares, nor fly, without need, from tranquillity. If Tiberius has learnt that you are here, your attempt to leave me and your seizure would be simultaneous events; if he has not learnt it, your departure is not yet necessary. But I will give all requisite orders, nevertheless, and make every preparation within three hours. Be of good heart. The power of flying shall be yours from this very afternoon. There—enough! What a fallen man is Lepidus!

Once, a world shook at my name; and now my gallant brother Paulus's widow and daughter imagine they are not safe under my roof!"

Rising from the table, he threw himself on a couch, near which some jewels were displayed on a stand. He took up a little casket, and said:

"Niece Agatha, I may never see your pretty face again after you once leave the Castle of Circello; wear this for my sake."

And opening the casket, he drew from it a twisted chain of gold, to which hung a jasper locket encrusted with other precious stones, and enclosing a miniature of a woman.

"Thanks," replied the girl. "If you will yourself place it around my neck, uncle, it will make the beautiful jewel more dear to me."

"There, my little lady," cried the old man, complying with her request; "what an ornament, to be sure, you are to the trinket!"

"The trinket to *me*, you mean," said Agatha. "What is inside this locket?"

"You open it thus," replied Lepidus, pressing a little ivory knob, releasing a blade of steel, and disclosing four golden signet-rings, such as Romans of distinction used to wear on the third finger of the left hand.

"The story of these rings," continued the triumvir, placing them in a row on the table, "is equally brief and curious. This on the left, representing Aphrodite armed, was Julius Cæsar's; I mean, it is precisely like his favorite signet-ring, with which he issued commands that were obeyed from the Tigris to Britain. The other three, going still from left to right, are all exact copies

of the three successive signet-rings used by our actual master Augustus; the last, which is a good likeness of himself as he was thirty years ago, being his present SEAL OF ORDERS.

“The one next to it presents a portrait of Alexander the Great. That was Augustus’s previous—his second affectation. The first was the Sphynx; see the inscrutable head! This, his first fancy, was an instinct. No affectation *there*, I can tell you. At the time of our quarrel and reconciliation, just after the war with Sextus Pompey in Sicily, Augustus gave me, as a mere token of private regard, the duplicate of his own seal-ring. Of course, I have never used it for public purposes. To do so would cost any man his head. The other two were sent to me by the artist, as duplicates of what he had manufactured for Augustus, because it was I who had advised his employment by the Princeps. The man was called Minas; he was a Rhodian; he was always grateful to me for my recommendation.”

When Lepidus had finished this concise little history, he replaced the rings in the locket, and Agatha, round whose neck the chain hung, promised, with many affectionate thanks, to keep the gift for her uncle’s sake. And so that night passed away till it was time to separate and retire to rest.

Several days went by; and young Marcus reappeared not at the castle.

CHAPTER VI.



WHILE time rang a monotone at Circello, an incident occurred at Formiæ.

Velleius Paterculus, who occupied rooms near those of Tiberius, in the Mamurra Palace, was alone in his bedchamber writing. It was close upon midnight when he heard a timid knock at his door. He expected nobody, and the hour was one when he might have been supposed asleep. He waited a moment, in a half-belief that his imagination had deceived him; but presently he again heard the knocking. He called to whoever was there to enter; and Claudius, the freedman obeyed, closing the door cautiously behind him.

"Sir," said Claudius, after coming close to Velleius on tiptoe, "being released from duty for the whole of this day, I spent it at Crispus's inn, where my intended wife is living. Among the lodgers or customers is a young knight Marcus, a grandson of Lepidus the triumvir—he that has the palace at Circæi. Do not ask me how I have learnt what I have learnt; but in the common room a debauched seafaring man, who drinks and chatters, seems to have had some masquerading order to execute, the effect of which was that Tiberius Cæsar was deceived; in short, adopted a false conclusion respecting the movements of certain ladies."

Here Claudius paused, in apparent alarm.

"Ay?" interposed Paterculus. "Well?"

"Well, sir," continued Claudius, with a sort of gasp,

"it was inevitable for me to be cognizant—to know, to guess—or, if I may so say, to be at least almost aware——"

"Go on," said the Prætorian officer, smiling; 'to be almost aware——'

"Of the plot, the arrangement for the safety of those ladies; and to know, or to guess, who contrived the scheme. The young knight whom I have mentioned—the knight Marcus—seems to have some spite against those ladies, whose safety is very dear to me."

"Why do you come to me upon this subject, my good youth?" said Paterculus.

"Because I think—and if I be wrong, I pray you to pardon me—that you also, illustrious sir, feel kindly toward the heroic youth who saved my life, and toward his mother and sister."

"You think what is true," said Paterculus.

"Besides, the knight Marcus," resumed Claudius, "has conceived the idea that he can pay his court and make his way by telling Tiberius both where the ladies are and what an elaborate imposture has been played upon Tiberius. This last information will be almost more prized than the first. Tiberius is proud of showing men that none can either deceive him with impunity or deceive him long."

"Very true," said Velleius.

"And this Marcus further imagines that he can trace the plot about the ship to its author."

"How?"

"The seafaring-man——"

"The seafaring-man will be of no avail in tracing the author. Can you trace him?"

"I ! illustrious tribune ? "

"Yes—for Tiberius ? "

"For Tiberius ? No."

"Then the author can never be traced," observed the tribune.

"I could swear I am glad," said Claudius.

"Swear, then, by *νῆ* and *μᾶ*, as you are a scholar," replied the scholarly soldier, "you have meant this report to me in kindness. But why are you afraid ? "

"Well, for this reason," replied Claudius : "A female servant at the inn, who heard you pleading with Crispus, the night when the ladies first arrived, and who has watched all your subsequent visits, and especially the last, although she could not overhear what you said in the ladies' room, has come to the conclusion that you are in love with one of them, she knows not which, and has told the young knight Marcus as much. He considers you the contriver of the ship stratagem ; and hopes great things from the favor of Tiberius by being the means of detecting a traitor so nigh his person, and of so important a rank."

"Leave that to me," said Paterculus. And, patting Claudius on the shoulder, the student dismissed him, finished a paragraph of his *Historical Abridgment*, and went to bed.

Two days later, Sejanus, Cneius Piso, Lucius, his brother, Governor of Rome, with Velleius Paterculus, and some other officers of high rank, were in attendance upon Tiberius Cæsar, while various subordinates lounged in an anteroom.

"Germanicus demands," observed Tiberius, "that the Prætorians should be in readiness to repel the

barbarians from Rome itself. Does not this look ugly?"

"Public alarm before the struggle," muttered Sejanus, "enhances public delight at the victory."

"He lays also," continued Tiberius, "great stress on the necessity of supplying him largely with money. We know the condition of the public treasury. He despatched the youth Paulus to Rome, did he not, on money business for the army?"

As no one replied, Tiberius resumed:

"Well, Lucius Piso, I have nothing but approval to express concerning your measures for the protection of Rome. You can go. We all return to town to-night. Our public business is over for this morning."

Lucius Piso, with his brother Cneius, and all the officers, except Sejanus and Paterculus, now took leave, after which, at a sign from Tiberius, young Marcus Lepidus was admitted. He showed much artificial firmness in that terrible presence. But he was obliged to introduce, as forming part of merely domestic news, the information which the cunning that often attends baseness had convinced him would be secretly valued by Tiberius. He was obliged to do this because he instantaneously felt that Tiberius would acknowledge no interest whatever of his own in the movements of the ladies who were at Monte Circello; and presently, when the youth detailed the stratagem of the two boys attired as females in the boat, he was astonished to see Paterculus glance with a meaning smile at Tiberius, and the latter nod in grave assent.

"I was the only person, you may remember, my Cæsar," said Paterculus, "who argued that all these

circumstances might be a blind. And as to the residence, meantime, of the gallant and noble youth Paulus Æmilius's kinswomen, you will also remember my remark."

"You thought it was Circello," said Tiberius, "and I could not believe you. It seems they are at Circello still."

"That last point," quoth Velleius, "is the only one which admits of a doubt. They have since had time to sail for Spain in good earnest."

"It is of no consequence," observed Tiberius. And he then, with a nod, dismissed young Marcus.

The latter rejoining Herod Agrippa and some other youthful courtiers, who would have rejoiced in the disgrace of a man of letters like Paterculus, astounded them by an account of the short interview, the very shortness of which was itself, indeed, also a subject of surprise to them.

Once more alone, Tiberius looked in deep thought from Sejanus to Paterculus, and was at length on the point of speaking when the latter anticipated him.

"Permit me to mention, my Cæsar," said he, "that I have formed such an admiration for the magnificent cousin of the self-sufficient lad who has just retired, and I feel also such interest in his mother and sister, that I could wish by every means to serve, benefit, and please that family. In addition to these accidental sentiments, I am naturally so soft and so weak, if pretty and helpless women appeal to me, that I shall greatly rejoice either never again to see the ladies to whom allusion has been made, or to be able to promote their welfare if I ever do behold them again. I owe it to my mas-

ter to throw whatever light I can upon the nature of the various instruments under his hand, in order that he may choose each for the work which it is best suited to perform with efficiency."

As regards both the future and the past, there was a masterly diplomatic skill mixed with the audacity of his speech, or rather in its audacity itself—a skill far beyond the cleverness of such a youth as Marcus Lepidus. He who had just helped victims to escape a pursuing tyrant, and was trembling lest his interest in them should be discovered by the tyrant in question, was not likely at that very moment to call the attention of the latter to the affectionate or kindly feelings which he cherished for those very victims. Here, then, safety was obtained for the past. Nor was one who entertained such sentiments a suitable or eligible agent for furthering the designs of Tiberius in the present case. And here, therefore, immunity was at the same time secured for the future.


"You are bold," said Tiberius, in a low voice.

"Better, my master," replied Paternulus, with an air of humility, "that you should be displeased by a momentary boldness in words, dictated by fidelity, than that you should be really wrathful at unfaithful silence after it should have perhaps frustrated some design."

"You say what is reasonable," replied the prince. "I will speak with Sejanus."

Velleius no sooner heard the words than he respectfully took his leave.

CHAPTER VII.

HE available force of the empire* had been hastily collected at Ferrara (*Forum Alieni*); and Germanicus Cæsar had been busy from daybreak in a boat among the Liburnian galleys which he had collected in the port from the opposite seaboard of the Adriatic, the shore of Illyricum (now Dalmatia). The commander-in-chief had both a precautionary and an aggressive design, in the execution of which these galleys, which had once before played a memorable part at the sea-battle of Actium, were to be used. After stationing, freighting and manning the galleys, and giving orders for the employment of them in a certain contingency, he returned to the shore, mounted his horse, and held a review of the legions. The review over, he addressed the troops in a spirit-stirring speech. Germanicus was rather an eloquent man, and, above all, he was facile and ready. He was just closing his short improvisation, when he noticed in the distance, coming toward the camp at a trot along the Bologna Road, a dust-covered rider. There was no mistaking either the horse or the horseman. Germanicus recognized his newly-appointed staff-officer, Paulus Lepidus Æmilius; and concluding that he had hastened forward to report the safe arrival of the expected treasure, he turned again to the troops, and told them that he would

* Although Germanicus obtained against the Germans great success (and his surname), the military incidents which follow are imaginary in their particulars, contrivances, and sequence, and are not offered to students, or submitted to critics, as history.

distribute a bounty within a very few days, the value of a fortnight's pay, but not deducted from nor interfering with the regular pay; and this to all.

At so pleasant an announcement, an immense shout arose among the legions; and it was in the midst of the cheering that Paulus reached the camp, and, uncovering his head, saluted the commander-in-chief, who was riding forward to meet him, after having thus committed and pledged himself before the legions.

"Welcome!" said Germanicus, adding in a low voice, "The treasure is not far behind, of course? It will be here to-night, I suppose?"

"I regret to say, general——" began Paulus.

"What!" interrupted Germanicus, with considerable excitement of manner, "have you not brought the treasure? Is not the money here?"

"No, general," returned Paulus; "but be pleased to hear what has occurred."

"Did not the Jew fulfill his undertaking?" again broke in Germanicus.

"He did, and delivered to me the treasure; and in all particulars, except one, general, I fulfilled your orders."

"What was that *one*?" asked the Cæsar, with an exceedingly dark and wrathful face.

"I did not carry the money in an iron box."

"Go on; tell me everything. I will hear you to the end," said Germanicus, compressing his lips and clinching his right hand.

"The facts are very soon told, general," resumed Paulus. "We could muster but ten legionaries, making, with Chærias, Thellus, Longinus and myself our whole

escort. By some means, it transpired from the Jew's house that a large treasure was about to be sent to the army, and a number of desperadoes in the Suburra determined to waylay us. Indeed, we were attacked by seventy armed men, not far from the town of Sora, beyond the other end of Lake Thrasymene, reckoning from here."

Germanicus could no longer control his excitement; he exclaimed :

"And so they took the treasure from you; and you are here alive, unwounded, reporting your little adventure!"

"I think somebody else, general," said Paulus, "would have reported that result for me; the treasure is safe."

"In the name of the Sphinx," exclaimed the astounded commander-in-chief, "explain yourself; you did not defeat seventy armed men with fourteen?"

"No, general; we parleyed, and argued, and gained time, and finally surrendered the iron chest and the wagon containing it; but the money was not there. It was the only point in which I ventured to deviate from my instructions."

As our adventurer then told the various devices he had employed, and the fortune which had attended them, Germanicus listened with the deepest attention, and whenever Paulus seemed, through modesty, to abridge or hasten over his narrative, called for every particular, and asked many minute questions.

When the whole story had been told, and all his inquiries had been answered, Germanicus said :

"I only hope I may show such good generalship on

a large scale as you have shown on a small one. It is likely I shall be able to give you an important post soon."

He then called to an officer, named Pertinax, and bade him conduct Paulus to his quarters, and to present him as their centurion to the fourth centuria of the legion to which he was assigned. He said Paulus would need refreshment, and could consider the time his own till daybreak, when there would be an escort of fifty horse ready for him, and placed under his orders, at the west gate of the camp.

After which he chuckled, and cried out gleefully:

"It would be an amusing scene to witness the division of yonder plunder. What will the knaves do with it?"

"Perhaps," said Paulus, "fight with, instead of over, their respective shares."

The general rode off, laughing heartily, and Paulus, thus far successful, followed his new guide, the centurion of the name of Pertinax.



CHAPTER VIII.



COUNCIL of war was sitting. It consisted of the most silent, discreet and gossip-scorning officers of a certain rank in Germanicus's army. The scouts who, riding small, hardy African horses, had gone forward seventy, and some of them even a hundred miles beyond the Venetian territory into that of the Rhætian Alps, had brought back an important piece of news. The substance of it was this: at the top of Lake Garda (then called Lake Benacus), the barbarians, according to their custom, had broken into two large bodies. Partly on account of the greater facility of obtaining sustenance and plunder, because they would waste a wider area of country; partly in order to march more rapidly; partly from a radically false and bad strategic motive, they had there divided, intending to ravage both the borders of the lake, and to take the imperial army as if in a pair of tongs, or a forceps, at the southern end. Meanwhile, a large sail-boat had come across the Adriatic from Illyricum, conveying two or three of the Roman officers who had escaped from destruction. These officers, being examined, had stated that the whole of that province was for the moment lost, that the garrison had been massacred, and that the barbarians, who at first had intended to cross the sea in galleys and land an immense force near Ravenna, or south of it, near *Portus Classis*, finding that the Liburnian craft had been all withdrawn to Italy by the prudence of Germanicus, were

now swarming through Histria, round the head of the Adriatic.

The tidings agreed. Germanicus explained his plan as detailed below, and asked his council their advice upon it, remarking that he had forty thousand effective men, and that the hordes with whom they were to contend might, perhaps, number three times as many.

“But half three times as many,” added he, “make only sixty thousand men ; and we know from long experience that we are generally equal to twice our own numbers. We must, however, avoid being struck by all that vast horde simultaneously ; and I conceive that we have now an opportunity of fighting the barbarians in two separated armies, successively, with the whole of our own force. They have committed a mistake, and frequently the best thing a general can do is to wait for such mistakes, and take advantage of them.

“A few miles north of Verona, there is a narrow, marshy, and difficult pass, between the eastern shore of the lake and the river Athesis (Adige).

“I have sent forward the best part of one legion, with plenty of spades and axes. Any number of wild Germans, marching upon us between the lake and the river, will there be checked and brought to a stand for weeks by such a force as I have sent, when it shall be well established behind earthworks. I mean at once to march, with every available man remaining, round the southern end of the lake, and to turn northward by our right-hand, so as to meet our visitors on the other, the western shore, where they will not seize us in a pair of tongs, as they hope and have said, but must fight us front to front. If we beat them effectually, as I calcu-

late we shall, we can return rapidly ; and, being near this end of the lake, and having four times a shorter road, we shall reach our detached legion above Verona long before the fugitives on the opposite route can rejoin the assailants of the detached legion. We will then change the defence of that position into offensive action.

“ You have heard my plan,” concluded Germanicus. “ Give me your advice. I require the youngest present, my new message-bearer, Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, to speak the first.”

“ General,” said Paulus, “ the plan seems to me to be sound. I may mention to the other officers, my seniors, that Germanicus Cæsar for the moment has discharged me from being his message-bearer and has appointed me to command the greater part of one legion, stationed at the marshy pass between the eastern shore of the lake and the river ; I shall, therefore, not share in your first battle. All I would ask of our general is to let me have sixty or seventy carpenters and artificers, one more balista for shooting stones, and three more catapults for darts and for the trifax.”

“ What is your purpose ? ” asked Germanicus.

“ My men,” replied Paulus, “ have already, by using the axe and spade, made their position very strong, with felled timber and earth, between the lake and the river. I expect the enemy to arrive in front of it shortly after my return to the post ; and I am in great hopes, as they cannot, at this season, soon get upon our flanks or rear, and must attack us upon a very narrow face, that a handful of Roman soldiers will be as good as thousands of savages. But I should be still more

confident of holding my ground if I could turn one of their flanks."

Here Paulus forthwith was interrupted by a general laugh, and Germanicus exclaimed:

"Are you so oblivious of the very first rudiments of fighting? You, with about three quarters of one legion, turn the flank of fifty or sixty thousand barbarians."

Again the grim old officers forming the council laughed loudly.

Paulus reddened, and with a slight bow, in a slow and deliberate way, said: "I want the artificers to construct me a large raft, on which I will place the balista and the three catapults. I have obtained two small rowboats. They shall be tugs to my raft. I will have the raft towed up the lake, on my left-hand, a little beyond the front or face-line of my small fortifications, out of reach of any hand-darts from the shore, and well secured against arrows, but the shore will be within the easy and powerful range of our own instruments, or tormenta, upon the raft. When the Germans attack me in front, their own right will be galled and tormented from the lake. This is what I call turning their right flank. I only wish we could have a similar establishment on the Adige, to turn their left flank also."

A sudden and frank murmur of applause succeeded to the previous derision, and the officers expressed their approval of Paulus's proposal. Germanicus took the same view, and gave orders that our adventurer should be supplied as he had asked; after which the council separated.

We need not detail the military operations which fol-


lowed. The Cæsar won a great victory where, about eighteen hundred years afterward, Napoleon, by very similar strategy, gained several others. But instead of immediately returning round the southern end of the lake, as at first he had thought of doing, he found he had time to do better; he pursued the enemy into the Rhætian Alps, dispersed them completely, and, making a short and sharp deflection over the top of Lake Benacus or Garda, marched back to the south, along its opposite or eastern shore. This movement brought him, one evening, upon the rear of the other German army, who thought at first that a large reinforcement of their countrymen were joining them; and, being attacked before they could at all understand who the assailants were, and straitened on both flanks between the lake and the river, while a fortification which they had not yet been able to take by assault prevented them from flying southward, they sustained one of the most terrible overthrows that a Roman army had ever inflicted upon barbarians. Many were slain, many drowned, having taken to the lake. A considerable number swam the Adige, and escaped. The rest threw down their arms and claimed the mercy of the victors. The Roman general immediately ordered the carnage to cease, the wounded to be removed, and the prisoners to be secured. Had Germanicus not made the circuit of the lake, but simply returned round its southern extremity, he would have attacked the front of the second German army, instead of its rear; and, its retreat being open, its losses would have been less. On the other hand, had Germanicus, with the plan actually adopted, been beaten, he must have been completely destroyed.

But he felt morally sure of the victory, partly through the effects of surprise, which was a strategical reason; and partly because, in a crowded hand-to-hand encounter upon a confined field, no weapons were equal to the short Roman sword and large buckler; and this was a tactical reason. Indeed, the bayonet of modern warfare would not have been equal to those weapons, without firearms.

A soldier in our times must have his rifle, and he could not carry this and a shield and a sword, too; the bayonet, therefore, is merely more handy as an adjunct to what has itself become indispensable. Still, might it not be worth while to add to a modern army a thousand or two thousand or five thousand men, armed in the old Roman fashion, with one small revolver of the best new pattern stuck in every soldier's belt? This body of men could not be used on every occasion; but where, from the accidents of the ground, they could first be brought (unexposed to fire) close up to the enemy, and then precipitated upon the flank of a thin infantry line, they would double it upon itself, and destroy it before the bayonet-carriers knew what was the matter.



CHAPTER IX.

ORRENTS of rain had fallen during the night, and during the next forenoon, following this great battle.

Germanicus, at midday, when the rain had ceased, called the legions into parade ; saw more than thirty thousand effective men mustered after his two battles and the severe forced march which had intervened.

The general thanked his army, and made a short speech, in the course of which he remarked that, although they had already received one bounty, they should certainly have another forthwith. This was cheered with a violent outbreak of shouting and admiration, as a very sweet piece of oratory ; and a veteran file-leader turned to the soldier behind him and remarked that Germanicus knew how to speak almost as well as Julius Cæsar was reputed to have done. When the noise of their literary and critical enthusiasm had subsided, Germanicus proceeded to read a list of promotions.

He appointed two *legati*, or generals, and directly afterwards called out, in a thundering tone, the name of Paulus Lepidus Æmilius.

No answer. There was a pause.

“ Is Longinus, the decurion, here ? ” he next asked. Longinus was absent on account of a severe, but not dangerous wound. No answer came, and another pause ensued.

“ Is the decurion Thellus present ? ” cried the Cæsar. “ *Adsum*,” answered Thellus, advancing a step beyond the ranks.

"You are wounded," said Germanicus. "How is it that no surgeon has extracted that broken dart from your shoulder?"

"'Tis only the point of a little German thistle," said the stalwart arena-king. "I hardly felt it when it stuck in me during our great mowing-match yesterday." The legionaries laughed and cheered.

"What has become of the youth who commanded your intrenchment?" pursued the commander-in-chief.

"He is badly wounded, general; and, as I could not find where he lay till daylight, the rain had been drenching him all night long. I am rather afraid he'll go."

Germanicus ordered a doctor at once to accompany Thellus and render what succor he could to the wounded youth. He, moreover, bade Thellus inform Paulus that, on account of services to the army now assembled, both in securing a large treasure, which only for him would have been lost, and in contributing afterward to the success of the campaign, and all this as much by his prudence as by his courage, he considered him not only to have given a splendid example, but to have shown the qualities of a soldier whom it is for the interest of the troops to see promoted.

"The more authority persons like this youth, Paulus, possess," concluded he, "the better and the safer it is for the whole army." He thereupon declared Paulus from that moment to be a military tribune.

The announcement evidently pleased the troops.


Thereupon Thellus led the doctor to a hut a mile away, whither he and two or three soldiers had carried Paulus. The young man was lying without motion or

consciousness upon a rude pallet. The doctor looked at his wounds, which were numerous about the chest—not one of them mortal in itself—but such as had caused great loss of blood. So many hours passed under the heavy rain of the preceding night, and the delay which had occurred before the wounds could be attended to, made the case dangerous. However, the medical officer ordered whatever his science suggested, and then left the hut, promising to pay another visit in the evening.

The commander-in-chief, not having anything to fear from the broken remains of the horde which he had dispersed, sent back most of the troops toward the south to take up their winter quarters in various towns. He had all the wounded who could bear removal removed; and for those whom he was forced to leave behind he built a wooden hospital, to protect which a small guard was assigned. He then took a few mounted servants with him, and, crossing the Po by a bridge at Mantua, travelled very fast on horseback across the Apennines to Rome, whither Augustus and Tiberius had returned, and whither Germanicus was thus the first to bear an authentic account of his late operations.

A solemn triumph would readily have been decreed to him had he not (partly through modesty, and partly through a politic fear of yet further exasperating the suspicious jealousy and hatred of Tiberius) refused it peremptorily.

CHAPTER X.

HE last we saw of Paulus's mother and sister was at Lepidus's Castle of Circaei, where Tiberius Cæsar had just ascertained them to have taken refuge. The aged triumvir was not less disgusted than alarmed at the threat which the ladies (whom he was protecting under his roof) informed him had been uttered by his nephew Marcus.

However, as Marcus came no more, and as the most unbroken tranquillity for weeks together attended the lives of all at the castle, the thought of really embarking for Spain was abandoned by Aglais and Agatha, who would thus have postponed indefinitely their reunion with Paulus.

They now concentrated all their hopes and dreams upon that event, but could not always banish the idea that he might, alas! have fallen in battle. News travelled slowly; and how the war went none had told them.

One morning, before they had left their bedroom to join the triumvir's early repast, they heard his voice at the door, bidding them come quickly down, for Dionysius, the Athenian, had just arrived from Rome, and had brought tidings of Paulus, the military tribune.

"Of Paulus, the *military tribune*?" echoed the mother and sister, when they were all seated together at their breakfast. How well it sounds! It is the very style and title of his father!"

"Ay," quoth the triumvir, "the splendid lad makes

my valiant brother's name ring once more. Once more we hear of Paulus, tribune of the soldiers; but this youth will soon be a legatus."

"Where is he? Why is he not here?" suddenly asked Aglais, turning with alarm to the messenger, their friend Dion.

"He is recovering from a wound," said Dionysius, "in a hut near Verona, where he is attended by your old freedman Philip."

"But with no doctor," cried the mother, "and without me?"

"Let us both go to Verona at once," said Agatha. "Melena can wait upon us."

"He has had the advice of a doctor, and of the best doctor living," said the Athenian. "Moreover, I have reason to believe that it would be dangerous for you and Agatha to undertake such a journey. Agatha, in any case, should not leave this castle till Paulus returns."

"But I can," said the mother; "my stay here is no additional protection to Agatha, and my presence with him may save the life of Paulus. You must await us here, my daughter. I will go this very day, taking our slave Melena. She understands how to nurse the sick."

As no objections to this plan were raised, the Athenian lady left the room to give orders. When she returned, Dionysius informed them that Germanicus Cæsar had re-entered Rome before he was expected, having entirely dispersed the Germans; that Paulus had distinguished himself during the operations which had led to this result even more by his military prudence than by his brilliant courage; and that he, Dionysius,

having learnt that his friend was lying ill near Verona, had persuaded Charicles to leave all his lucrative practice in the capital for the sake of visiting the wounded hero; that the two Greeks had travelled together to Venetia; and that Dionysius had himself seen Paulus, who was rapidly recovering; and he had then hastened back to bear the good news to Aglais and Agatha.

"But this is not all," added the Athenian; "I have something of importance to tell you about your suit for the recovery of that part of the Æmilian estates which once belonged to the brother of our host the triumvir—I mean, to your gallant husband. Your suit is over, and well over."

"Has Augustus made up his mind?"

"Yes; but in a curious manner. You have heard of Vedius Pollio, of Pausilypum. He would have lived much longer only for his lampreys; but now he is gone. He died rather suddenly, the other day, blaming the gods for taking him, and mankind for not keeping him. Although he has several kinsfolk, he has willed his Vesuvian villa, his pottery, and all his treasures to Augustus. But the emperor, who, for some time back, had known how Pollio's lampreys used to be fattened, was wonderfully disgusted by the devise. Indeed, so far as taking personal possession of the property was concerned, he renounced the legacy with an oath. I thereupon seized my opportunity, brought forward again the case of your son, and urged upon Augustus that, if he could not restore to the last of the great Æmilian race the Æmilian Castle on the Liris, he might, at least, confer upon him this Cumæan estate instead. The emperor pondered awhile and consented, but yet with a singular qualifica-

tion.* The Lady Plancina, wife of Cneius Piso, had, it seems, some claims upon old Pollio; and Augustus has ordered a patent to be drawn out by the lawyers, conferring the property upon Paulus as an imperial grant, but, should he die without an heir, conveying it afterward to this Lady Plancina."

"I have heard of reversions to the young after the old should die," observed Lepidus; "but the disposal which you describe is indeed a curious caprice on the part of my once colleague. Paulus must marry at once, and defeat the possibility of so whimsical a remainder."

That day, the Lady Aglais, taking the slave Melena with her, departed for Rome in one of Lepidus's old-fashioned carriages, while Dionysius returned to the capital in his own chariot at the same time. Aglais was glad of such protection and company on the road. There were two or three *mansiones*, or little post-houses, and two imperial *mutationes*, where they calculated on obtaining changes of horses, as Dionysius had taken the precaution of furnishing himself with the requisite *diploma*, or warrant, from Lucius Piso, the governor of Rome.

Besides a trusty serving-man of Lepidus's who acted as coachman, a couple of grooms went with the lady the first stage, in order to ride back the triumvir's horses. In Rome, it was planned Dionysius would see that Aglais should obtain the readiest and best means of continuing her journey northward; and the Athenian even promised himself to escort her all the way, and to

* The real historical appropriation of this property to build "*Julia's Portico*" occurred in due time.

guide her to the very house in which her son was now regaining his health and strength, near Verona.

Agatha wept bitterly at parting from her mother, for the first time, as it happened, in her whole life. Two incidents marked the afternoon of this first separation.

It was at midday that the sound of the receding wheels died in the distance ; and the aged Lepidus, patting the head of the fair girl, said :

"Come, niece; have fortitude! Your mother will soon return with our noble Paulus, and they must see you cheerful and happy, or they will blame me. Go to your apartments, and prepare for a little fishing excursion. I will call the slaves, have out our large galley, and give you a row up and down the shingly beach."

She laughed through her tears with a little gasp, and obeyed.

A few Thessalian dogs, famed as watchers, ranged the gardens of the palace. While Agatha was dressing for the boat, she heard one of these dogs bay angrily ; and, when she descended into the garden, she saw her uncle in the act of shutting a heavy wooden door in the enclosing wall, and caught the following words addressed to a man on horseback, of whom she obtained only a momentary glimpse :

"No more in my house after such a menace ; but tell this to Tiberius *you*, if it will help your interest with him, tell him, I say, that very little is now required to induce Lepidus, once triumvir, to bequeath all his property to Tiberius Cæsar. You fence with an old swordsman."

And while yet speaking, Lepidus slammed the door, and Agatha heard a horse gallop away.

"I've outgeneraled *him*, I think," muttered the old man, turning back into the garden.

"Who was there, uncle?" asked Agatha.

"One who shall not trouble us again while my brother's widow and daughter are under this roof," replied the triumvir. And he led Agatha to the boat.

Their fishing expedition was not very gay, and they were both content when it was over. It was evening as they re-entered the courtyard of the castle. They were met by an old slave, who held in Lepidus's establishment a place corresponding to that of a butler in modern families.

"I am sorry you were away, sir, an hour ago," said he to the triumvir. "Just before you entered the boat, a knight, or more than a knight, whose horse was covered with foam, rode up to the door at the end of the garden, by which your grandson had departed, and asked for the Lady Aglais. When told she had left, he said, hastily, 'What! in the ship for Spain?' When I mentioned for Rome, he asked, Had the young lady gone also? and when I said that the young lady and you, sir, were out fishing, he called for some one to hold his horse, and stated he would write you a letter. Searching for his tablets, he muttered that he must have left them in Rome. I offered to get him paper, a reed, and some cuttle-fish ink, if he would enter the house. He did so, looking much disturbed; and saying, as often as three several times, that he had no one to send whom he could have trusted; that he had been obliged to come himself; and that, if he did not at once return, he should be missed. When he had written a few words, he folded up the paper, asked me for wax and

a taper, and sealed the letter with a signet-ring which he had on his finger. Then he held the letter so, without giving it to me, and at last tore it up."

"But," said Lepidus, "did you not ask who he was?"

"Yes, sir; and he told me he was a friend of the Lady Aglais, and of the young lady."

"Was he dressed as a military man?"

"No, sir; he had a sort of toga, only it was dark; the hood was brought over his head; he was belted. He was a handsome man, under the middle age. But I was made certain of his rank by the voice, and by his general bearing."

"Well, did he leave no message?"

"None, sir; he merely said that it was very unfortunate he could see nobody, and especially that he could not speak to the lady, your sister. He then mounted his horse, and rode away swiftly."

"Here is the seal, I do believe!" said Agatha, picking up a piece of wax on the fragment of a letter.


"Ah!" said Lepidus, examining it. "How well I remember the hateful emblem. That used to be the signet of Mæcenæ, who brought my son to the block."

"Uncle!" whispered Agatha, who also had looked at the seal, "come into the house, and I will tell you who this visitor was."

"You can go," said Lepidus to the servant.

"It was Velleius Paterculus, the Prætorian tribune," said Agatha. "That is his device—a frog, is it not? I have seen his notes before, sealed with that emblem. Some danger, against which he would fain protect us, is impending."

CHAPTER XI.

N passing through Rome, Dionysius had again called upon Charicles, and had obtained from that celebrated physician a promise that he would, within only a few hours then next ensuing, leave Rome once more, and fly north as fast as good horses could whirl his carriage, in order to pay Paulus another visit and watch his recovery. "I may even overtake you upon the road," were the words of this *medicus insignis*, as Tacitus terms him; and with a grateful pressure of the hand Dionysius left him to wait upon his countrywoman in the prosecution of her anxious journey.

The next step was to obtain another set of warrants from the prefect to secure them relays of horses along the road at the various post-houses, where none not connected with the imperial administrations would be so served. The good-natured Lucius Piso again furnished the Athenian with the indispensable orders, and the lady, with her female slave, renewed her travels after less than half a day's delay in the capital, Dionysius accompanying them still.

Having completed their rapid journey, they found Paulus not in the little hut, whither Philip had first carried him, but in a beautiful room, opening upon the courtyard, or central garden of a fine country-house about a quarter of a mile distant.

Thither they had been immediately guided by a lame soldier walking with a crutch. The master of the house

was absent, and indeed seldom lived there. He was a rich and dissipated young patrician, who much preferred the gayety and magnificence of Rome to the quiet of the country. A steward and his wife, with three or four outdoor slaves, took care of the almost abandoned place.

As Aglais, having descended from the carriage, followed the lame soldier along a rough path, through a fine wood of sycamores, she observed here and there near the stately mansion a decurion or two and several other soldiers. She asked what that meant; and the man said that these were convalescents from among the wounded left behind in the neighborhood by Germanicus; and they were all too much attached to Paulus to return home or to leave the spot where he lay battling for his young life till they knew his fate.

"You are brave and noble friends!" cried Aglais; "but in what state, then, do you consider my son to be?"

The soldier darted a shy, quick glance of compassion at her, and, muttering something, hastened his hobbling pace to such a degree that the ladies could hardly keep up with him.

They found Paulus carefully laid upon a soft couch in a beautiful room, and Thellus seated nigh, watching him.

"Alas! lady," said Thellus, rising, "he will not know you." So saying, he left the chamber on tiptoe. In vain the mother, kneeling by the bedside, called the youth in the voice so dear to him. He was talking to himself in a mixture of Greek and Latin, and said, "It would be pleasing to the Great Being to save an innocent young couple from brutal tyranny; would not a

God rescue the world? why, it would be godlike; it was not more reasonable to expect from a man what was human than from a God what was divine. Augustus might take their inheritance, but he would find nothing save stones in the strong iron box; no, the treasure is safe, general; suppose the Germans swim the Adige behind us, what then? A military tribune, mother, already your son a tribune! By fire you will subdue the—was she the Sibyl? That was little Esther on the raft, covering the left flank of the entrenchment. They swim the river—come, Thellus—face to the rear, be men. The lawyers were no match for him. Dion broke Sejanus—Dion held torches to the prefect's nose. What a splendid scene in the palace! I'll drink at the fountain; they may stare, but drink I must; the emperor wants a draught, the Cæsars want a draught; water, clear water—what mean you by keeping me from the fountain? Augustus told me to drink!"

Thus he raved, and the weeping mother, while moistening his lips and head, said ever and again in vain: "Paulus, my child—Paulus, do you not, then, know your mother?" And the night came; and the old stewardess brought refreshments to Aglais, weary with travel, distracted with anguish.

But the stewardess was unable to induce her to take rest or leave the room. She therefore lighted lamps in the part of the chamber behind the sufferer's bed, prepared couches there for the mother and for herself, and made every arrangement which her experience and prudence could suggest to render more supportable to the forlorn stranger the coming watches of the night. She told Aglais that the military doctor would pay his visit pres-

ently, and that she felt sure the sufferer would recover; she bade the mother control her emotions, because the youthful tribune would become sensible in a moment, and it would injure him if he saw her in grief.

Aglais was occupied in fanning the wasted and sunken face of Paulus, occasionally moistening his lips and temples, from which the light brown locks fell away tangled and dank upon the pillow, when Thellus, entering, announced the doctor. This functionary found the patient still in delirious condition, was informed that there had been no intermission for hours in his ravings, and declared that, although he dreaded the result, because Paulus was perceptibly losing strength, he would bleed him, as the last chance of saving his life. Everything was ready for this operation when the sound of wheels and the furious tramp of horses were heard. The surgeon, remembering that it was the dead of night, and feeling surprised at a noise for which he could not account, turned round in suspense, grasping the fatal lancet. Thellus was holding an earthen ewer in one hand, and with the other was gently supporting Paulus's wrist. On the one hand stood the doctor, and, on the further, the nurse, raising a taper so as to shed its light over the bare arm of the young tribune. Aglais was leaning over her son's face on the opposite side of the couch, too anxious and too frightened to weep, and, almost as one who is dreaming, conscious of the rush of wheels and the tramp of hoofs. Soon there was the sound of persons springing to the ground, a low murmur of voices was heard outside, and then the door of the apartment was pushed open, and Charicles, followed by an Asiatic servant, carrying a box, entered.

A few whispered words were sufficient to inform the local doctor that the most eminent member of his profession then living stood before him ; and Charicles at once added that, being long since an intimate friend of the sufferer and of his whole family, it was natural and right that they should desire, and he give, attendance and help in the present case. The manner of the celebrated physician was at once noble, simple, and natural, without any affectation of patronizing his lowly colleague.

Having persuaded the Lady Aglais to leave the room, and having examined Paulus's wounds, which he declared to have been most admirably treated, he said his colleague had divined the proper method of cure in starting from the principle that Paulus had already lost far too much blood.

"That is quite evident," said the local doctor, concealing his lancet.

Charicles unlocked his box, produced an ointment of some kind, and caused the patient's spine, from the nape of the neck to the small of the back, to be vigorously rubbed by Thellus for about twenty minutes. He then applied to each temple a piece of linen saturated with a liquid, the acrid odor of which failed to inform the professional person present of its nature ; and, in order to keep the narcotizing appliances in their places, he bound them gently and rather loosely round the head. He, with his own hands, cut off the beautiful brown locks of the youth, and desired Thellus to continue from time to time, till Paulus should sleep, to touch the top of the patient's head with a sponge steeped in a lotion which he placed upon a table near.


In a small tray of pottery he then laid some whity-brown leaves resembling the coarse description of paper called *hieratica*, which he set on fire, and which burnt with a hissing sputter, and emitted much smoke. In a moment the whole atmosphere of the room was changed; those standing round the couch drew involuntarily a long inhalation; and Paulus, who in the midst of his ravings had been respiring irregularly and with painful difficulty, heaved a free and even breath which it was a relief to hear. At the same time the faintest conceivable undertint of color came, in that artificially-produced climate and chemical atmosphere, timidly and flutteringly into his cheeks. The physician set a large phial on the table, saying that the patient would soon sleep, and that the moment he awoke he must be made to take a portion of its contents, which he specified. Finally, he went for Lady Aglais, brought her back into the room, told them that Paulus would, beyond all doubt, recover; that he would in the morning feel a ravenous appetite; that he must not be allowed to eat to the extent he would wish; that the best decoction of meat (in modern phrase, good, light, pure soup) ought during the night to be made ready for his breakfast, after which it would be well to give him a small quantity of generous wine. He proceeded to fix the diet to be afterwards used. But Charicles forbade them to let the patient leave his bed until he should have finished the contents of the large phial, the method and times of taking which he particularly and accurately described. The last direction which he gave was not to permit Paulus to talk too long; but, whenever he should be inclined overmuch for conversation, to entertain him with music instead.

"Remember," said Charicles, "that nothing has been now done except to give you the battlefield for fighting this illness, and the time needed to do so. I have effected nothing except to abate the delirium, to quiet the nervous fury, to quicken the blood, to relieve the breathing, and to promote the sleeping inclination of your son, lady. He would have died to-morrow of nervous exhaustion, insomnolence, and anæmia combined. The easier breathing, the quicker blood, the reduced imagination, the lull of the quivering nerves, the power to sleep (which will soothe and foster his whole system), all unite to give you a chance of beginning, remember, merely beginning, your contest with this illness in the early morning. That phial is what you must carefully administer. Then adhere strictly to the diet, and your son will be able to travel in a fortnight."

After a light repast he took his leave, and started upon his return journey to Rome the same night. But Dionysius remained.



CHAPTER XII.

HAT does thy wisdom think of this imperial grant, my necessitous husband?" asked the Lady Plancina of Cneius Piso, as they sat together near a large brazier of burning logs, in the most secret room of the Calpurnian House, which, as the reader may remember, was surrounded by the willows and the beech-trees of the Viminal Hill.

"May the infernal gods destroy that old dotard!" cried Piso, his sinister face quite informed with a sort of livid light. While he uttered the imprecation, he gently rubbed his left hand over the back of his right.

"That is saying, not doing, is it not?" pursued his partner. "And the sweet youth, who, when he felled your slave, Lygdus, to the dust, left that mark upon your hand at the fringe and fag-end of his blow: what say you of him? Won't he greatly enjoy our property? He'd have marked your face, too, only for the thickness of your mask, the other night."

"But still you are to have the property of Vedius Pollio, after this Paulus," observed Piso.

We may remark that Plancina wore an out-door dress, as if about to take an airing. "A compliment," said she, "to my youthfulness, I suppose. Now, I had imagined that I was old enough to be this lad's mother. But, no doubt, since you say so, I shall succeed him in the property. For, in the first place, I shall naturally live much longer than he will; and, in the second place, through politeness and out of consideration for my

expectant state, this new-made military tribune and landowner will, of course, abstain from marrying ; for you must remember it is only in case he should die before me, and so die without an heir, that I am to have the reversion. When I think of it in this point of view, I feel sure that the young patrician will even see the propriety of very soon committing suicide on purpose to let me enjoy the estate. Shall we write him a little note hinting that such is the only course left for him to pursue in common decency ? ”

“ Your note,” said Piso, looking up with a ghastly expression, which suddenly came into his face, “ will not induce him to die.”

“ Could you induce him to die ? ” said the woman ; “ for bear in mind that it is not yesterday we began to expect the property now estranged from me and from mine.”

“ Those who have been known to expect it,” replied Piso, “ and, being known so to do, have been allowed so to do, have acquired a moral right to it. Ever since old Pollio began to have such a paunch, I have thought of the wealth he could leave ; I have watched the growth of his obesity with unremitting attention. But he was fattening for another.”

“ Could you induce that other to die,” repeated Plancina, “ before somebody else induces him to marry ? ”

Piso said nothing.

“ Have you heard me ? ” asked this woman.

Piso, with tears in his eyes, again exclaimed : “ He was fattening for another.”

“ You insufferable driveler ! ” cried Plancina, leaving him abruptly, and then quitting the house alone on foot.

The enormous extent to which husband-poisoning had been carried in Rome, not very long before the date at which we have arrived, is well known; and there was such a deadly and ferocious ring in Plancina's voice, as she pronounced the last words, that Cneius Piso was roused from his tender musings upon old Pollio's disappointing death and useless corpulence, to glance at his wife as she left the room. Her face, which was mobile in feature, but always like the whitest paper in color, presented to his familiar eye so questionable an expression that he mentally asked himself whether she could gain anything by his own demise. A tress of black hair had accidentally escaped from the *galerus* or pile on the top of her head, to which it ought to have remained bound, and, hanging down her cheek in front of the ear, made her complexion seem still more pallid. Her thin, black, sharply pencilled eyebrows were as tautly drawn as a bowstring when the archer is levelling his arrow; and under them her eyes, which, when calm, were of some very dark tint, flung from their cave a kind of yellow or tawny fire.

When she had left the room, Piso rose, stretched himself, yawned and muttered with a smile: "No, no. I am necessary to all her schemes. But old Pollio's estate must come to her. I wonder did Augustus guess that his grant to yonder youth was so framed as to be a death-warrant?"

CHAPTER XIII.

LATE in the night of that day, shortly before the setting of the moon, a lady, closely veiled, descended from a hired carriage, dismissed it, saw it return toward Rome, and then began herself to walk along the solitary road in the direction of the famous Tivoli grotto, upon the banks of the Anio. Quitting the road after a time, and passing through the fields, she reached a curved row of ancient yew-trees, which presented their convex face outwards, inclosing on three sides what seemed to be a garden, bounded behind by shrub-covered rocks. The trees, which stood close together, were interlaced by an impenetrable hedge of some kind of cactus. In the very centre of the convex, however, was a gate of pales, and the gate was open; and in the gateway was a figure standing, the figure of a tall and stately woman. As the lady, who made straight for this gate, approached, she suddenly noticed the form of the woman, and paused with an involuntary start. She whose appearance occasioned this emotion was leaning with both hands upon a long staff, and looking upward, lost in contemplation as she gazed upon the countless worlds that rolled through the blue and luminous immensity. She was clad from throat to foot in a long black robe, the hood of which, intended to be drawn forward over the brows, had fallen back in neglect, and disclosed a beautiful affluence of flowing snow-white hair, which glittered as if a cascade of cold glories was

pouring perpetually around her calm temples and oval head.

With the snowy hair, her eyebrows were nevertheless of a pale brown color; she had a perfectly colorless face, a straight nose, the nostrils of which were clearly defined, delicate, and almost transparent; while her calm, large violet eyes had so clear, and at the same time, so solemn an expression, that the thought came: What can that be which her eyes have seen? Some of the light of the heavens seemed to stream back again from her countenance as she gazed.

The lady stood still, looking at this figure in silence and wonder, till suddenly she felt a species of shock; for the great violet eyes had fallen, and were bent upon her. Recovering herself, the veiled visitor advanced a few steps, and, with a low obeisance, said, in a disguised voice:

“Wondrous and venerable Sibyl, I have come to you in my distress.”

“There are,” replied the woman slowly, “no more oracles for the Sibyl to give. Deiphobe who lived and sang in this grotto—Deiphobe, my sister, is dead; and these hands have buried her. The urn of my sister Herophila has long stood upon its dusty table, in its solitary vault upon the shores of the Euxine Sea. Ah! why recount the names of the scattered choir whose last sighs I (far-wandering) have been permitted and sent to receive? The nine are gone; their songs will be heard no more; their warnings have been given. Read! The time has come—the time has come, when I, *the tenth*, have but to reach the East, and die!”

A bell at a great distance, swinging its melody from

a mountain-top upon a gusty night, touching the ear with a faint and interrupted music, would give alone an idea of the tones which slowly uttered these words. The veiled lady, after a short pause, said, still disguising her voice:

"No oracles or prophecies have I come to seek. I am a needy woman; my son is very sick with hurts received in battle; I cannot afford to pay a doctor; the nurse relies upon herbs; I fear she is ignorantly giving my son poison; I know that in the garden of this grotto all medicinal plants were cultured by you, or rather, it seems, by your sister; and that she used to effect cures among the poor people by means even of poisonous herbs; for poisons rightly used will cure persons, if sick, whom they would kill in health, but my boy's nurse has no such skill. Show me then, I pray you, the various herbs in your garden, in order that I may know how to guard my child from unintentional poisoning."

"Enter," said the Sibyl; "there are only two poisonous plants in this garden. Here is one, which kills by slow degrees; it is easily recognized, you see. There is, however, a malady in which it is the only remedy. Here is the second; it is certain death for a person not already ill to drink as much of its decoction as a scallop-shell would hold. A minute quantity, nevertheless, has saved life in certain cases."

The veiled lady, without ceremony, gathered considerable quantities of each of these herbs, and stowed them (carefully separated from each other) in two pockets or folds of her robe.

"What is your son's malady?" asked the Sibyl.

"A dreadful fever consuming a body weakened by wounds and by a night's exposure to rain and cold while in a state of insensibility."

"Then," said the Sibyl, "either of those herbs would be fatal, if no medicines——"

"Precisely," interrupted the veiled lady, in her natural voice; "and therefore I want them, in order to make sure that it is neither of these which the nurse shall give him in her ignorance. There are comforting simples which resemble them, and, having the real poisons, I shall be able to compare."


The Sibyl fixed a long and steady glance upon the stranger, whose face was so closely covered, and said :

"Something tells me that whether you succeed in your present design or not, it is probable you will have a short and a wretched life ended by a dreadful beginning."

"Ended by a beginning!" answered the veiled lady in a scoffing tone. "That is truly sibylline. I thought it was an end which ended things, and a beginning which began them."

"Go and see, woman of the two voices; go and discover, woman of the darkened face," exclaimed the Sibyl in a tone so indescribably solemn, sincere and mournful, that the stranger drew her ricinium with a shudder around her, uttered an exclamation resembling a scream, and fled across the moonlit fields to the lonely highway.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERYTHING had happened as Charicles predicted. About dawn, Paulus awoke free from delirium, recognized with wonder and joy his mother, pressed the hand of Thellus, and with a smile which threw a quick and new light upon the alterations made by illness in his face, declared that he was violently hungry. It is needless to say with what a cheerful strictness of obedience Aglais and Dionysius adhered, amid the fulfilled predictions of Charicles, to all the directions of that famous physician.

First, with a certain solemnity, Aglais administered the proportion of medicine contained in that phial to which the Greek doctor had attached such importance ; then they gave Paulus a light breakfast and the prescribed quantity of generous wine. Already he looked quite different. A tint like that of the inside of a sea-shell was stealing into the haggard countenance ; and presently he threw himself back upon the cushions and slept like a child.

The sun was high when Paulus was once more awakened, eloquently pleading his hunger. But the stern mother and firm friend were inexorable. They called him tribune at every turn, and extorted slavish obedience to their sovereign authority, Aglais pouring out his dose of medicine with the air of an Eastern queen, and Dionysius handing it to him with the concentrated firmness of an executioner.

“ But I am miserably hungry ! ” expostulated the young soldier.

"Be hungry, then, my son!" said Aglais, smiling ferociously.

"You are to be hungry," added Dionysius, with cruel glee; "and hungry you must be!"

It was the fourth day of these peaceful scenes and this happy convalescence; the sun of winter was diffusing an unusual degree of brief warmth over the landscape; Aglais and Dionysius were seated in the large porch, on each side of Paulus's couch, which had been wheeled thither for him; Thellus and the freedman Philip were pacing the gravel esplanade in front; and in the distance a group of soldiers (some of whom limped) who had just taken leave of the young tribune, believing his recovery to be at last secure, were seen marching southwest to strike the continuation of the *Via Nomentana*, and so return to Rome.

Dionysius, as the reader will remember, had communicated to Aglais at *Circæi* the favorable decision of Augustus, and now they had been conversing about the immense wealth with which Paulus would be able to support the memory of his ancestors, the rank of a military tribune, and the just fame which he had acquired so quickly by talent and courage, when the stewardess came from the house into the porch and said:

"Do not let this young lord stay too long in the air, my lady; it begins to be cold and damp early of an evening now. His room is ready."

"How ready?" said Aglais. "You were to turn it upside down, you said, sweep it, and rearrange it; you have not had time."

"The new woman had been helping," replied the

stewardess; "I ought to have presented her for your approval, my lady. My master, the poet Lucius Varius, wrote to me to command that I should regard you and your family as masters of this place and of all his household. Marcia, come hither!"

The new servant came, with broom in hand, in working-dress as she was, and made her obeisance. She was a plain woman, in middle life, with red hair and nut-brown complexion; but seemed, on the whole, to have the air of one belonging to a rather better class than that which performed menial labor.

The Greek lady made a slight inclination of the head, and the new woman retired.

"It is still warm here," said Aglais, addressing the stewardess; "we will go in presently. I see by the water-clock that the time for the potion has arrived"—and she held up the phial, which she had carried from the room and kept in her hand—"bring me a cyathus."

As Paulus took the potion, his mother, looking at the phial, remarked that it contained only three more doses.

The day passed; the family had gone indoors, and Paulus had been listening to his mother as she played ancient Greek airs upon the six-stringed lyre, when a gentle knock was heard at the door. Melena, opening it, admitted the new servant, who entered bowing, closed the door herself, and, approaching Aglais, said:

"I am the destitute widow, my lady, of a decurion called Pertinax, well known to your brave son."

Here Paulus, who was not asleep, opened his eyes: "Is poor Pertinax, then," he asked, "among the slain?"

"Alas! tribune, yes," answered the red-haired woman; "it was with him, I understand, that Germanicus

Cæsar quartered you before the late battles. Hearing of your dangerous wounds, and learning you were so near, I felt glad that in seeking employment, which my destitution now makes unhappily necessary, I should have found it where I could wait upon and serve one whom my poor husband so much esteemed."

"I am sorry for Pertinax," said Paulus.

"I have not been able to give him the rites of sepulture," said the woman. "He fell, wounded, into the Adige, and his body has not been recovered. Ah! it is dreadful, lady," continued she.

"You have had no sleep now for several nights; your son is no longer in danger; take, and let your waiting-woman take, the repose you both greatly require, and I will watch instead of you to-night."

Aglais refused this offer with many thanks. The red-haired, brown-faced woman bit her under-lip, and looked down. "Well," said she, "I will no longer disturb you, or keep the young tribune from his rest. I will merely refill and trim the water-clock, and retire."

She trimmed the clepsydra as she said; she folded up and placed tidily aside some cloaks and wrappers, she arranged in more symmetrical order a few vases and the lamps; and finally, standing with her back to the glass between her and the table on which the medicine was placed, secreted the phial in her robe, and left in its stead another phial resembling it in shape, in size, and in the quantity and color of liquid which it contained. She then withdrew.

Before daylight next morning the good old stewardess crept into the room, as she had regularly done ever since Aglais and her waiting-woman had come to

the house, and inquired in a whisper how the night had passed. She then told Lady Aglais that just as the servant, the red-haired woman, was going to bed over-night, a man had come to the house to say that some peasants had found the body of Pertinax the decurion; and the widow thereupon seemed to be much excited, and commissioned the stewardess to excuse her to the Greek lady, for she herself must go at once and see that her brave husband's remains were honorably buried. She added that, the young tribune being out of danger, she could be of no further service, and would not return. She had then departed with the man, who seemed to be a shepherd. All this the stewardess mentioned in a whisper; and, her tale told, she retired.

Shortly afterwards, Paulus awoke. It was now the time prescribed for the potion, which had hitherto been administered to him with such palpable benefits. Melena brought the phial to Aglais, who carefully measured out the proper quantity. Then, looking at her son with a loving smile, the mother, who was so justly fond and so reasonably proud of him, bade him take his last dose.

A beam of the morning sun was shining through the chamber, and Paulus, before swallowing the liquid, held it in the ruddy light, and gazed awhile at the ruby color brought upon the surface, as if his eye in some languid whim was ensnared and held captive. At that moment, the liquid was darkened by a shadow flung from the doorway. There, as if framed against the sun's rays, stood the majestic figure of an aged, tall and beautiful woman, wearing a long, dark mantle, but with a staff, her head uncovered save by her snow-white

locks. The Athenian lady uttered a slight cry. But Paulus, laying his hand upon her arm, whispered reverentially :

“Mother, yonder stands the Sibyl! It is she who bent over me in the early morning of that formidable day, near the old Latian town, and told me that fire would subdue the ferocious beast.”

As he spoke, the noble and majestic figure had advanced up the chamber, saying in Latin, with a slow bend of the beautiful head, “*Ave!*”

“*Ave hospes!*” returned Aglais.

“I greet you once more,” said Paulus, in a low voice, and with a look of profound respect.

She took from him the goblet which he had still held in his hand, gazed into it earnestly, breathed over it for a moment, set it upon the table, and then muttered, “I again saw her only three hours ago—the woman of the two voices—and I knew her even in the starlight, although the swift carriage was bearing her to her door along the smooth road. I am sent to you in time, my son. You need no more medicine; but this cup has death in it. You, lady, and your son, are called for in Rome. Hasten to Rome. Lose not an hour. The lioness has lost her whelp, and Cæsar himself could not hold the prey. On the road you will learn more. And now, *vale et salve.*”

“But why do you use the words of a perpetual farewell?” asked Paulus.

As he spoke, Dionysius, who had slept in a neighboring apartment, entered noiselessly.

The Sibyl moved toward the door, and, seeing the Athenian, fixed her gaze upon him as she answered the

question of his friend: "Because," she said, "you will see me no more. The time appointed for me has almost passed away. I am journeying even now to a holy land; for perhaps it will be granted to me to behold with these bodily eyes before I die him whom we have all announced. But you have deemed our words to be as ravings, and the hopes to be false which we have declared to be true."

"Not I," said Dionysius.

She took a small roll of paper from a fold in her mantle, and, handing it to him, said:

"Read, and remember this. Your name already is coupled with that of the beautiful and famous city which is the very capital of human genius and the centre of intellectual pride. You are Dionysius of Athens—of Athens, the lamp of Eastern Europe. But a race in the West, more famous and more polished than the Greeks, with a capital greater and more beautiful than Athens, will claim you one day as theirs also, and, for fifty generations after you shall have died, a warlike people will continue to shout forth your peaceful name over fierce fields of battle in a language now unspoken. Your reputation spans the past and the hereafter of two distant nations, like an arch, coming in honor out of antiquity and the East, and settling in a glory, never to grow dim, over the future of unborn millions at the opposite side of Europe.

"You are deemed its child by the fair city of the past, which connects its name with yours; you will be held among its parents by the still fairer city of the future—a queen city, where in many temples he will be adored whom your Athens at present worships with a

simple statue as the unknown God: *for he has come. Yes, my son, he has come.*"

The beautiful aged face was lighted up with the love of a child, yet the speaker bowed her silver locks in an attitude of unspeakable solemnity and awe as she pronounced the last words. For some moments after she had ceased to speak, all who were present preserved the air and look of attentive hearers, like those who have been listening to a strain of music, and remain awhile as though they were listening still, when it has died away. When the roll of paper, which the Sibyl held out to him in her white and almost transparent hand, had been taken by Dionysius, she crossed the threshold, and, once more saying "*Vale et salve,*" disappeared.

In obedience to her more personal warnings, the whole party temporarily domiciled in that remote Lombard house made immediate preparations for a return to Rome. The groups of soldiers who, out of interest for their hero, their newly-made tribune, had loitered in the neighborhood, although recovered from their hurts, came now to inquire from Paulus, as the highest military authority within reach, what orders he had to give, and to receive from him requisitions or billets upon the quæstors of the several towns and stations along the road to Rome, for rations and lodgings, and small allowances, from post to post. These Paulus wrote out for them with a strange feeling of the immense social space which he had traversed upward within a few weeks' time; for he felt that, only a little while ago, he would have been taking the orders which he was giving, and would have been almost as much in need of the billets he was dispensing as the decurions who now ap-

plied for them to him in behalf of themselves and their soldiers.


Thellus, with part of a centuria of convalescents, was to march, and, starting at once, he undertook to be never at more than a few hours' distance, even after they should overtake him, from Paulus and the Lady Aglais, who, with the slave Melena, were to make use of Dionysius's handsome travelling carriage, driven by Dion's own coachman. The freedman Philip, leading the Sejan horse, started in company of Thellus's little column. A small carriage was obtained, in which Dion himself journeyed.

In short, considerable groups started for Rome by different means and in relations to each other more or less close, which constituted them all one company on the road.

And thus we leave them, to notice events by which they were gravely affected, which had occurred, or were even then occurring, elsewhere, and which were preparing a reception for them at their destination.



CHAPTER XV.

HE reader will remember the adventures which happened one night at a certain house in the Suburra, and the share which Josiah Macca-beus and his daughter Esther had in preserving, not only a large amount of public treasure, but Paulus and his companions themselves, from the fate which had been carefully planned for them and of which there was so imminent a danger.

Josiah never had an hour's peace in that house afterwards, nor Esther an hour's happiness.

At last, the daughter was neither sorry nor surprised when her father announced to her that he would not be scrivener and clerk any longer to Eleazar, his wealthy countryman. In a modest if not parsimonious life of service, Josiah had saved sufficient means to place his daughter and himself above sordid penury while they should live together, and when she should marry to give her a humble portion, a portion far below what a maiden of one of Judah's noblest names might, without romantic or arrogant pretensions, have deemed suitable, but equal to all that Esther wished. Meanwhile, Josiah said that he had not announced to her his intention of ending his servitude with Eleazar until he had made all the preparations and taken all the measures which were necessary for carrying that intention into immediate effect.

It does not belong to the present work to look back beyond this last proceeding. The end was that Josiah

determined to leave Rome forever, and to return with Esther to the land of their forefathers. Esther, while at once acquiescing in this determination, remembered the gallant and noble young soldier whose life, and indeed professional prestige, she had saved from the schemes of caitiffs; and she would have been glad to see him once more—glad again to hear him say a kind and sad farewell, with such words of gratitude and appreciation as formerly spoken by him, which dwelt in her recollection, and tended to persuade her that she would herself be recollected in like manner by him from time to time hereafter. Could she even have given him some token, one of their Syriac manuscripts, which, when he studied it, would remind him of the donor! But now the best was not to think of such idle whims. Josiah decided that they should embark at Astia, in a ship which was even then on the point of sailing for the East.

The distance from their lodgings in Rome to the port was not more than fifteen miles, including the passage of the Tiber, the great place of embarkation (afterwards, from the reign of Claudius, so famous and so noisy with a whole world's traffic) being on the right or northern bank.

On a southern branch of the *Via Astensis*, or Astian highway, not far from a crossroad, which, coming northeast from the coast, struck the branch highway where it was going northwest to the mouth of the Tiber, perhaps some seven or eight miles from Rome, stood a house in a shrubbery of oleanders and myrtles, a little apart from the thoroughfare. In that house lived an old Jew named Issachar, from whom Josiah had, by letter, claimed a night's hospitality for himself and his

daughter. Accordingly, he and Esther, dividing a moderately short journey into still easier stages, had arrived, toward evening, at the house of the crossroad (or rather the forked road), with the intention of starting betimes next morning for Astia, and there going quietly on board their ship by early daylight.

The evening meal was over; the weather was mild, and Issachar proposed to Josiah Maccabeus and his daughter to take a little stroll in a sort of arcade walk parallel with the highway, and formed of a double line of old sycamores.

Here they were walking to and fro upon the thick and rustling carpet of fallen leaves, conversing about Jerusalem and the affairs of their country, when their attention was attracted by the sound of wheels from the southwest.

"It is along the byroad from the coast lower down," said Issachar. "Carriages but seldom travel that road. It leads nowhere, save to the bare coast; or there is another southward bend from it toward the Circæan promontory (Monte Circello), and a carriage went past early this morning, attended by horsemen; it may be the same returning."

As he spoke, the roll of wheels became louder, and a vehicle drawn by a couple of horses, which seemed much blown, approached at a rapid pace. Four horsemen (two a side) rode by the carriage. As this last came better into view, it was apparent that one of the animals harnessed to it, and drawing it at a laboring canter, was seriously lame. The little group in the sycamore arcade could observe all this without themselves being at first discerned by the travellers. When

nearly opposite the wicker-gate leading into the grounds, the principal rider, who seemed to have the whole of the small expedition under his charge, uttered two or three classical curses, in which the pleasing alliteration of *peream pejus* often recurred, and called a halt.

"This horse," said he, "will not hold out ten minutes longer; here is a habitation; we will change the brute; whoever lives here must give us a steed for love, or money, or——"

He then went to the horn-window of the carriage, opened it, and, using much fierceness of voice and manner, was heard by the group in the sycamore avenue to say, "How is she now?"

"She is insensible," answered a female voice; "she will die if you do not give her some rest and encouragement."

"It would not," replied he, "be executing my orders, or accomplishing the end in view, to let her die on our hands. Once she is in your mistress's house at Rome, she may die as soon as she likes. Out with her; we must carry her into yonder house, while I get a horse changed."

Issachar, followed by Josiah Maccabeus and Esther, had meanwhile shown themselves, and were soon lending their assistance to a harsh-featured woman in supporting, across the little lawn which separated the road from the house, a poor young damsel who had partially revived from a deathlike swoon. Once across Issachar's threshold, she was laid gently over some cushions on the floor, in the room where the family had just dined, and where a female slave had already lighted several little saucer-like lamps of scented or sweet-burning oil.

The daylight had not quite gone, or these lamps would hardly have enabled Esther, who was compassionately bending over the young girl, to recognize the wonderful likeness between her and the youth in command of the party who had come, a few weeks before, to Eleazar's house in the Suburra for the military treasure.

She hastily expressed her sense of this likeness in a muttered exclamation, in which the name of "Paulus" occurred. At the sound of that name the damsel opened her eyes, and feebly cried, "Where is he? Where is my brother Paulus?" so feebly, indeed, that none save Esther distinguished the words; and even she with difficulty.

Esther had the instinctive good sense to perceive that brutal and lawless violence were rulers of the present occurrence, and could alone account for the situation of the young lady before her, who was in the midst and in the power of persons evidently not her friends. How could she have fallen into their hands?

Just then the woman who had accompanied the young lady in the carriage pushed Esther aside, and peered close into the pale, still face of the former. "I fancied she spoke. Did she speak? Is she again in a swoon?" were her words.

"I will get some wine," said Issachar. And a servant who had heard him brought ample store of wine and drinking vessels; whereupon the leader of the travellers, who now entered the room, glanced at the motionless figure of her whom he was attending, and said to Issachar: "Master, I am in the service of potent persons, and must request you to furnish me with a fresh horse. I will leave the lame one and a sum of money

with you till your own horse shall be returned to you."

"This poor damsel," replied Issachar, "is clearly in no state to travel. If you take her away now, you will carry her into Rome dead. A horse I can furnish for your necessity on the terms you mention, although you state not who the potent persons are whom you serve."

"I wonder at you, Lygdus," remarked the woman. "It matters not whom we serve," continued she, addressing Issachar; "we will pay you for anything we need. Thanks for the wine. Yes, we will take some wine; only a little, mind, Lygdus."

Lygdus, having poured out some wine on the ground, with a mutter, helped himself to three cyathi in succession. He then smacked his lips, poured out a fourth measure from the testa, and, standing astride, waved his hand to and fro, and said: "I am a man who knows how to do what I say I shall do, and, in fact, whatever I am told to do; that is"—here he drank off the wine, refilled the goblet, planted his free hand, with the fingers clinched upon his hip, and swayed his head in a defiant manner, as he glanced at every person in the room successively—"that is, if it be the right kind of person who tells me, and none else would dare. I am afraid of nothing. That is well understood. Men whisper as I go by, 'There goes Lygdus! What a man that is! He's afraid of nothing.'"

Here he frowned and drank off his wine. And as he was now again stretching his hand toward the testa, the woman said:

"Beware! you have taken much to-day; you took

some at the seacoast; you have taken some since; you won't reach Rome."

"Seacoast!" cried he, with the same attitude and gestures as before; "this next goblet is for the fainter, the fainting one, the pale damsel. *Peream pejus*, why does she faint? I don't mind stating, here or elsewhere, that whatever I do, Cneius Piso, the great Cneius Piso and Sejanus, the still greater Sejanus, will say is well done. They will say, when I get back to them, '*Euge*, Lygdus; *euge*, good Lygdus; you are the man, because you are afraid of nothing.'"

Here the woman seated herself upon some cushions, shrugging her shoulders; and the other continued:

"Right; rest there. Let refreshments be brought; let the horses be fed outside. I halt here for half an hour and half that again. Let that fainting damsel have something to revive her! Ho! Who has got a flute? I can play the flute as well as any of the strolling female flute-players."

Here Esther stole swiftly up to her father, took him aside, and whispered to him that it would be wise to humor this murderous-looking guest; and asking Josiah Maccabeus whether he did not remember the youth who had come to Eleazar's house with Germanicus's ring for the public money, she bade her father look closely at the features of the beautiful and manifestly high-born damsel, who was under the escort of so ruffianly a party. Josiah glanced at the pale face and started.

"What a resemblance!" he whispered.

In the same cautious tone Esther replied by informing him that the young girl had only that instant called for her brother Paulus; for she was obviously distraught

with ill-usage and her own terror, and thought that Paulus could be summoned to her rescue.

After interchanging a few more whispered remarks, Esther took a salver with some wine and bread on it and returned to where the young lady was lying. The sour-faced woman, on hearing Lygdus express his intention of resting awhile where they were, had already attended to her own comfort. Seeing the damsel on whom she seemed to have the duty of waiting to be in such good and tender charge as that of Esther, she rose from the cushion where she had been sitting, took it up, and, placing it in a corner, with a smaller one for her head, settled herself at the angle of the two walls, in the attitude of one who is determined to have a slumber.

"Ay," quoth Lygdus, to whom Issachar had actually handed a *tibia sinistra*, or melancholy, deep-toned flute, and who had flung himself on a pile of cushions, crossing his legs like a Hindoo, "sleep you, and I will soothe you with a sad and solemn ditty."

And forthwith he began a most funereal and monotonous performance, with which he himself seemed to be ravished. He interrupted it only to sip a little wine, after which he proceeded again, rocking his body in tune to his strain, and producing over and over again about a dozen notes always in one arrangement.

It was a curious and fantastic scene in Issachar's dining-room, by the dim lights of the little lamps, for nearly an hour.

Meanwhile Esther, by the tenderest and most soothing sympathy, had assuaged and revived the spirits of her who was apparently a prisoner to this horrible gang. Some earnest conversation passed between the fair girls

in whispers, which ended in Esther's saying solemnly to the poor damsel:

"Yes, I promise it most sacredly; but I do not need this gold ornament; my grandfather has money."

"Keep it *for* me, then," replied the other. "How can I be sure they will not take it from me? Besides, the objects in the case will prove to Velleius Paterculus that your tale is true."

"Be it so," said Esther; "but now I must at once leave you. The first requisite, as well as chief difficulty, will be to trace you in, or follow you now through, the immense labyrinth of Rome. To secure this end, measures must be taken without the loss of a moment; great energy is needed. Trust to Esther's love and Esther's zeal as if Esther was your sister. And now, anger not these persons by exhibiting your terror and grief. Be calm; and appear, if you can, more than calm, even cheerful. Heaven has sent you in me and my father's friends who will watch and strive for you outside; and who will, besides, inform your brother Paulus, your uncle, the triumvir, and your wellwisher, Velleius Paterculus, the powerful tribune of the Prætorians, into what a situation you have been cruelly and violently hurled."

"Oh! how kind, how good, how like a dear sister you are!" replied Agatha, while silent tears streamed down her fair young face, and she pressed almost convulsively in both her own hands the hand of the beautiful Hebrew maiden.

"There," returned Esther, gently wiping away the tears with her palm, and kissing Agatha—"there, smile now; drink this wine, and try to rest till you go."

And, leaving her, she retired from the apartment, beckoning to her father and Issachar to follow. Good and evil powers, angels calm and mighty, angels fierce and terrible, were contending now for the destruction or deliverance of a poor little maiden, with all the wit and all the resources at the disposal of one of these in the old Roman world, and with such weapons as the other found it necessary to wield.

Josiah Maccabeus, upon learning what his daughter had to communicate, hesitated not one moment to give up their journey to Palestine in order to return to Rome and try every means for the liberation of Agatha.

Issachar placed a small house which he possessed in Rome at the disposal of his countryman, and to this house it was resolved they would return that night. But the most necessary operation of all, because every ulterior measure depended upon it, was to watch and track Agatha to the place in the enormous city in which her captors should lodge her. Without a knowledge of this spot, nothing could be accomplished either by fair means, or by contrivance, or by force, should force become possible under any circumstances.


For any of the friends then holding council to follow the carriage with its escort of four horsemen would be to throw away the last chance. The pursuer would be remarked. Issachar had in his service an active, intelligent, and trustworthy Hebrew lad, generally employed by him out-of-doors and on errands between the great city and the lonely house where he lived. This lad now received his orders, and set forward toward Rome, riding a mule barebacked, and with a wallet containing a few refreshments slung round his neck.

He had perhaps half an hour's start when Lygdus was informed that a new horse, in lieu of the lame one, was harnessed to the carriage, that all the others had received food, and that everything was in readiness. He thereupon nodded, drew a final wailing from his *tibia sinistra*, flung down that instrument, sprang to his feet, collecting his party, and, without thanking Issachar for the hospitality upon which he had made so considerable an inroad, departed uttering curses similar in number and gravity to those with which he had called a halt.

Josiah Maccabeus and Esther allowed an hour to pass, and then, ascending a carriage of old Issachar's, drove back to Rome to the small house already mentioned as the property of Issachar, where they arrived late at night, and found their messenger expecting them. *He had succeeded.*



CHAPTER XVI.

"ARLY next morning Velleius Paterculus was in his garden, seated under a fig-tree, with his writing tablets in his hand, when a slave approached and told him that an old man and young girl, in the attire of the *despicatissima servorum pars* (the Jewish race), craved permission to speak to him in private. Habitually accessible and affable, as we have described him, he ordered the slave to show the strangers the way to where he was then seated. Josiah Maccabeus, with his daughter Esther, having been accordingly introduced, the slave withdrew. During Esther's tale, Paterculus changed color, but preserved otherwise a singularly cold and grave demeanor. He wrote in his pugillares the particulars of the place (the street, number, and house) where Agatha was confined; but, with the wariness of a courtier, professed some surprise that his present visitors should apply at all to him, who was not a prætor nor a judge. Esther said she only obeyed in this the request of Agatha herself, who deemed him to be not only a sincere friend to her mother, her brother, and herself, but also cognizant in some way of the quarter whence the present trouble and danger emanated.

Having said this, she stopped suddenly, and looked him full in the face. He replied in a quiet, cautious way: "You have done well to obey such a request." She then showed him the locket, desiring him to open it, and remarking that the contents of the locket, ac-


cording to Agatha's expectation, would authenticate the various statements which she, Esther, was now making. Paterculus opened the locket, and, taking out the rings it contained, looked at them with an air of indifference at first. Suddenly he started, exclaiming: "How comes the signet of Augustus among these trinkets?"

In fact, Paterculus, though he knew only the latest of them in date, held three signets of Augustus in his hand. Esther could not inform him. He reflected a little while, and inquired whether she felt authorized to intrust him with one of those rings for a few days. Esther felt not the smallest scruple or doubt about assenting to this at once; whereupon the Prætorian tribune thanked her with a smile, and said, in an emphatic manner, that she could not better serve her fair young friend than by hastening to apprise Paulus of his sister's situation.

News, he added, had been received that Paulus (entirely recovered from his wounds) had set out for Rome with a body of troops, and ought even then to be somewhere on the *Nomentana Via*, not far north or north-east of the capital. "Dionysius, the Athenian," concluded Paterculus, "is with this travelling party, in which, by the bye, you will find also the damsel's mother, the Lady Aglais; and, in my opinion, it is nearly as important (if not more important) to let Dionysius know what has occurred, as it is to inform Paulus of it. Dionysius will convey the truth to Augustus himself."

Hearing this, Esther and Josiah thanked the Prætorian tribune, took leave of him respectfully, and being guided back through the garden by the same slave who had introduced them, hastened away upon their new errand.

CHAPTER XVII.

T was the first fresh hour after sunrise, about ten miles north of Rome. Thellus had taken the bridle of the Sejan steed from Philip the freed-man, declaring he felt disposed for a ride, only he feared, upon that beast's back, it would be a short one, when Paulus himself, who had made his litter-bearers stand and let him out, overtook them, and, pointing to the white arches of an aqueduct which spanned the road a little way in front, exclaimed:

"Friend Thellus, I feel as though I were stronger than before my wounds. I will mount my tawny slave here, the Sejan horse. You see we are close to Rome; gather all these fine fellows, these brave soldiers, in order of march, who so faithfully stood by me in the hours of suffering; we will enter the city in military fashion."

Mounting the bank at the roadside, he leapt from it upon Sejanus. The great steed, after his wont, stood still, as if electrified, and then bounded into the air. This was enough to tell him who the rider was; and, thereafter, he paced forward with a grave, steady, and mighty stride—perfectly docile, and proud of what he carried. In front, moving at an easy pace, was the carriage of Dionysius, in which the Lady Aglais travelled; and ahead of this again was the smaller vehicle containing Dionysius himself. Paulus rode for a while by the side of his mother's carriage, conversing about Agatha, and arranging that, the very moment he should

have reported himself to Germanicus, they would start together for Monte Circello, and joyfully surprise Agatha by appearing unannounced. He then spurred forward, and in like manner accompanied the vehicle of Dionysius, expatiating on this pleasant little plan with immense zest, and urging the Athenian to come with them.

Dionysius, however, entertained certain fears and anxieties concerning Agatha which, at such a moment especially, he could not find it in his heart to mention to so affectionate a brother. This was the fairest and happiest time Paulus had ever known; a single word, a mere hint, would suffice to change all that mental sunshine into darkness and storms. The Greek affected to consider the invitation; and Paulus, reining in his horse, waited for his mother's carriage in order to inform her; but when it rolled abreast of him, he caught her in tears.

She had been musing over those words of the Sibyl—*"The lioness has lost her whelp, and not all the power of Cæsar can keep the prey"*—and, remembering the venerable woman's command to haste to Rome, and her prediction that on the way thither more would be learnt, not a bird had flown by without startling the lady, until, at last, her concealed anxiety overcame her firmness. At Paulus's look of astonishment and distress she smiled and made some excuse. Paulus determined to call a halt of half an hour or more, and take breakfast in a neighboring grove of elms and sycamore-trees not far from the highway, in the very centre of which grove was a well, overflowing into a tiny brook upon a gravelly bed. It was a pretty place, with a fretwork of shade

and morning light adorning the turf under the boughs. Cushions were soon arranged by the soldiers, who, retiring to the roadside, imitated the example of their superiors in a ruder fashion, and partook of less delicate fare.

Thus were they engaged, when, along the straight road, looking small in the distance, some sort of conveyance was seen approaching. There are queries which seem too trivial to be asked in words by any person of any other person, but which each person asks himself in thought: such as was the query which the soldiers by the wayside, now lazily watching this vehicle rolling toward them, were all propounding mentally: "Who comes yonder, I should like to know?"

Yonder came one whom a Roman soldier had not seen for forty years, but who, in the generation preceding that of the legionaries at this moment listlessly watching his vehicle, had been the master of armies, and a sovereign among the sovereigns of the world. Arriving where Thellus and a group of the escort were waiting for the party in the grove, the vehicle stopped, and an old man of stately presence descended from it and said:

"Decurion, I have learnt in Rome that the new military tribune, Paulus Æmilius, had not yet returned from the North, but was on his way; doubtless you can tell me where I shall find him."

"Sir," said Thellus, "I am more than a decurion, though still wearing the dress. Yonder stands the young tribune, Paulus, under the sycamore-tree."

Meanwhile, the party in the grove had recognized Marcus Lepidus, the ex-triumvir; and his nephew, hearing Aglais and Dionysius pronounce the name (for, as

the reader will remember, Paulus himself had never seen him), ran to meet and salute his uncle, and led him to the place where Aglais and the Greek were. In answer to immediate inquiries about Agatha, Lepidus told, at great length, and in all its details, a catastrophe which we will recount merely in outline and in its issue.

Under a cliff, about a mile north of Lepidus's castle, a little creek ran into the shore out of the Tyrrhenian Sea. The beach here was rich in shells, which Agatha took delight in gathering. One day, at noon, he had accompanied her to this favorite resort, and while she amused herself in picking and sorting her treasures, he sat down in the shade with his back to the rock, and awaited her fatigue, while he took out Livy's *History*, of which he was in the habit of perusing a chapter every day, and began to read. Thus seated and moving respectively, sheltered from the whole world, the cliff behind and the sea before, they were so placed that his niece, as she explored the shingles hither and thither, was sometimes in view, sometimes not. He had no suspicion of danger, and least of all of the particular danger which was impending. Once or twice, a considerable interval—say ten minutes—having passed without seeing her, he had turned his head, not from uneasiness, but curiosity, and had each time found that she was busy at her innocent work, only she had shifted the ground of her explorations a little. At last, when a quarter of an hour had intervened since he had seen her, he looked round and discovered her nowhere.

He called and she answered not.

Ascending the small cliff, he failed to see her anywhere on land, but he beheld a boat of six oars at some

distance up the coast, pulling swiftly north along shore, and in the boat he thought he could discern a female figure. Agatha and he had stayed so long at the little creek, that the short winter daylight was now waning. There was no shore road by which, even were he young and vigorous, he could have run ; the ground, on the contrary, was rough, the sea-line was curved, several little inlets indenting the shore ; and, finally, could he even have overtaken the boat, he was alone. He was obliged to return to the castle, and, by means of his slaves, to cause inquiries along the roads and crossroads to be made, going forth himself that evening and all night in a carriage. He spent the next day similarly. All his efforts were fruitless. No trace, no news of his niece could be obtained. He, therefore, knew nothing better and nothing else to do, than to hasten with his melancholy tidings to Aglais and Paulus.

As the four persons present agreed, after a short discussion, in a complete certainty that this was the work of Tiberius, Dionysius was asked whether he could not lay the facts before Augustus, and secure his intervention. He replied at once that, while there was no proof which he would not give them of his zeal in such a cause, all hope from the plan suggested must be thrown aside. First, whatever their own moral certainty might be, to advance such a charge against Tiberius Cæsar, without having the smallest chance of making it good, would not only fail to work Agatha's deliverance, but would insure the death of every one taking part in the accusation ; secondly, Augustus was now sick, and not to be approached.

"Well, Germanicus, then ?" said Paulus.

"A comparatively mean person, an ordinary knight," said the ex-triumvir, "could compel Tiberius to surrender the damsel if that knight could clearly show to the people and to the soldiers, that Tiberius knew where she was and had her in his power. Failing the means to show this, and to show it in a plain and patent way, Augustus himself, not to talk of Germanicus, would be unable to assist us."

Paulus took Thellus into the secret, and Thellus swore a voluntary solemn oath that, if they could once learn where Paulus's sister was immured, he would raise all the gladiators in Rome, and follow Paulus with them whithersoever he should lead, and, if they had to burn the whole capital to do it, would rescue his sister.

"Flames shall not stay us," he cried; "by such acts fell the kings of Rome in former times, and by the same this tyrant shall come down too. Nay," continued he, "it is not the gladiators alone whom we can call to the doing; let the troops, who know you, know this. Why, Germanicus could now become master of the world. But enough; I wander beyond what touches us. Let us try, however, young tribune, what effect this tale is likely to have upon the hearts of valiant men; tell it to Longinus and to Chærias."

"Think you?" asked Paulus.

"Yes," replied Thellus; "they will both follow you to death—Longinus, because he hates villainy in itself; and Chærias, because he hates tyrants."

Paulus made the experiment. It proved Thellus to be right. Thellus was indeed a man who, however lowly placed, would, by his valor, eloquence, natural genius, and capacity for influencing masses of human

beings, but for that child of his poor Alba, but for his Prudentia making home bright and the world distasteful, have been the leader of some grand uprising; military at first, political in the end.

"Surely," said Thellus, "we shall quickly learn where your dear sister lies cruelly hidden among her enemies from all her friends."

"And how, dear friend?" asked Paulus, resting his clinched right hand upon the mighty shoulder of the former arena-king.

"You remember Claudius, the freedman of Tiberius, who, thanks to you, instead of rotting now in the earth, after a horrible death, is about to marry Benigna: *he* will tell us."

"Let us, then, hasten to Rome," said Paulus.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT night, when his mother, with her faithful old slave, Melena, had been comfortably lodged in a house of Thellus's selection, the following slight but formidable steps were taken :

First, Cassius Chærias and Longinus went forth to visit various military posts throughout the city, and disseminate news of the heart-moving tragedy in which Paulus's beautiful young sister was to be the innocent chief sufferer, and of which Tiberius Cæsar had begun to enact the cruel reality. Secondly, Dionysius proceeded to the palace of Germanicus Cæsar (to whom Paulus had duly reported his arrival) to disclose to that able, powerful, and well-disposed prince the dark story of Agatha ; and to represent that the popularity of young Paulus, and the general hatred and fear felt for Tiberius ; the excitement of a recent victory, to which no " triumph " had been awarded ; the beauty and innocence of the youthful lady against whom a Tarquinian outrage so audacious had been perpetrated ; the intrinsic atrocity and heinousness of the whole affair ; the indirect insult to Germanicus himself, involved in affronting and oppressing the last representatives of a noble line known to be under his protection ; the glory acquired by the noble youth, his staff-officer, of whose absence in battle so vile an advantage had been taken by the remorseless and shameless tyrant—were all combining to agitate the army in Rome, and to work up the soldiery into a state of indignation truly dangerous, in which a single word

from an influential man, or but a clenched hand lifted on high, would create a volcanic uprising that would shatter the whole frame of the Roman Empire into dust.

"Mind," observed Dionysius to his friends, when undertaking this momentous mission, "were Tiberius in Germanicus's place, and Germanicus in his, I would not adopt this measure, because worse pretexts and worse opportunities are sufficient to produce revolutions and civil wars, for the furtherance of base personal ambition; and whereas Tiberius would not scruple to use for such ends the explosive elements accidentally collected around us, Germanicus *will*. He shrinks from sovereign power, but will put such a transient pressure upon the tyrant as will secure the deliverance of your daughter and sister, dear friends."

Thirdly, Thellus, with Paulus, went forth to find Claudius, the freedman; and, on the way, Thellus was to call at various centres and resorts of gladiators, and by trusty adherents of his own to prepare that most redoubtable, lawless, desperate class for an organized attack upon some given house, palace, or place afterward to be designated.

The two former undertakings were accomplished with all the success that could be expected.

As Thellus and Paulus were returning to the lodgings of the Lady Aglais, after having conferred with Claudius at Tiberius's own palace, and after having called at the various centres of gladiators (where Thellus effected fully the purpose for which he went), they had arrived close to Aglais's lodgings, in a narrow street, badly lighted by a single oil-lamp suspended upon a cord which ran from house to house at the middle point

of the street's length, when—being now far from the lamp in question, and the night being dark—Paulus accidentally brushed somewhat roughly against the figure of a girl, who clung to the arm of a tall man, and who was, with him, going in the contrary direction. He apologized, and the girl returned some mild reply in a sweet voice, which he fancied not unknown to him. In doing so she had thrown back the hood of her *ricinium*, but the night was too dark to allow recognition. Paulus remarked to his friend, as they went on, that he had somewhere heard the girl's voice ere now. Thellus also had, he said. They found Aglais waiting up for them, and stated to her that the freedman, Claudius, was not yet apprised where Mistress Agatha might be detained, but would quickly and privately inform them when he discovered the place.

“But I know it already,” said Aglais, who looked pale and haggard, but full of lion-like wrath and courage. She then related that a reverend old man, with a most beautiful girl, had ascertained, at one of the military posts, Paulus's residence, and, on calling and being informed that he was out, had asked for Aglais; that she, Aglais, had only just then seen them; that they had given her all those particulars which Lepidus, the triumvir, was unable to furnish concerning Aglais's ulterior fate; and had positively stated that her principal captor, being tipsy, had referred to Cneius Piso and to Sejanus as the persons under whose authority he was acting.

“*Tiberius's confidential officer*, and private assassin (*sicarius*),” said Thellus. “We can prove *now* who is the criminal. Well, they said where your daughter is?”

"In a house on the Viminal Hill, surrounded by willows and beeches."

"I know it well," cried Thellus. "Why, it is the Calpurnian house, the house of Cneius Piso's wife, the Lady Plancina."

"Oh!" exclaimed Aglais, bitterly; "do you remember, my Paulus, at Crispus's Inn one morning, our darling telling us that she had received an invitation from a dreadful, pale-faced, black-eyed woman, to just this very description of house in Rome?"

"Distinctly," replied Paulus.

"The invitation, it seems, has been renewed," remarked Thellus, with equal bitterness. "By the way, my young tribune, we can guess who the old man and beautiful girl are. You brushed by her in the street."

"Yes," answered Paulus, "Josiah Maccabeus and his bewitching and noble little daughter. I met her just now in reality; I meet her often in my dreams."

At this moment, some distant shouts, and one long shriek (very faintly heard, however,) disturbed the nightly quiet of that great city.

They listened; but, except a much lower, confused, vague, ominous murmur, far away, could distinguish nothing.

"Has Longinus or Chærias returned?" asked Thellus.

"No."

"Well, to-morrow nothing can be done. One more day we are compelled to give to the wicked man; the gladiators and my preparations require no less. Be here, Tribune Paulus, as the shades of evening begin to

rush down to-morrow. I am glad it is the Calpurnian — detached dwelling.

We will burn it, and through the flames carry Agatha away, dead or alive. If alive, well; if dead, down goes Tiberius Cæsar; *for that I'll answer*. It is not certain that men eat bread and not stones, if my certainty of this be not a true one."

He took up his brass helmet to leave, when steps were heard in the passage leading to the *conclave*, or inner room, where they conferred. (It was a rude kind of *triclinium*.) Knocking at the door, and being told to enter, Chærias appeared, followed by Longinus.

"Work done?" asked Thellus, in a low voice.

"Overdone," replied Chærias. "The news flew like fire in dry grass among the troops just come from the Rhætian valleys and Venetia. It is exactly that kind of Tarquinian tale which would madden them if touching themselves, and every man among them really makes the case of their young tribune his own. Three hours ago, some of them assembled in a thermopolium, and began to drink and discuss the story. 'Who will henceforth,' asked one, 'go to a distance from wife, or sister, or sweetheart, or even mother, if, while he is fighting for Cæsar, Cæsar himself makes this infernal use of his very absence?' They worked themselves into such a frenzy (while we were elsewhere, kindling the like fury far and near) that, without concert or forethought, out they marched straight to the palace of Tiberius, and demanded the immediate liberation of Agatha, daughter of the Æmilians. Being told that no one knew what they meant, or to what they alluded,

and being ordered to disperse quietly, they resisted the guard.


"Thereupon, not half an hour ago, the Prætorians were set like dogs upon the poor drunken brawlers, and some half-dozen of them were slaughtered. The rest fled."

"We heard just now a strange sound," said Thellus. "Well, let this be known in addition. *It serves.*"

And, taking leave, he and the two who had last come went away together. Truly a little yeast, capable of leavening the whole mass, had suddenly been cast into Rome.



CHAPTER XIX.

f this period of the reign of Augustus, there were in his court several great parties, or rather several other courts ; for each party had a court of its own. We have alluded to some of them already,—that of Antonia, that of Germanicus, that of Julia ; and there were yet others. The most powerful of them was the party of Tiberius, who certainly may be said to have kept a very magnificent court before he was sole sovereign.

In this court, the prime favorite, the confidant of the next emperor, both before and after he ascended the throne, the depositary of all his secrets (if any man then alive ever knew them all), was the smooth and polished, but stern, impenetrable, and subtle Sejanus, commander of all the Prætorian guards.

Velleius Paterculus was numbered with, and certainly belonged to, the same party. He owed his promotion to Sejanus, who, for some reason or other, was very fond of him ; and it is most singular that, while this circumstance was not only known to Tiberius, but had opened for Paterculus the way into that prince's favor, yet Velleius contrived to remain to the last a friend of Sejanus, without either sharing his ruin or even incurring the suspicion of his master—a master who was nevertheless, perhaps, the most suspicious tyrant that ever vexed mankind.

Striking differences of character often subsist between men who entertain a strong friendship for each other.

Velleius's history (although frequently apologetic rather than impartial) discloses the writer to us as a man who, for a pagan, had no mean notions of what honor and morality prescribe. On the other hand, the single fact we have mentioned is sufficient to prove that he was a consummate master of all the wary precautions, the quick contrivances, and the supple dexterities by which alone an actor in such a sphere could at once continue to hold high office and yet keep his head upon his shoulders. One Englishman and two Scotchmen out of every three, would infer that such a head must have been worth keeping—either a good one, or good for nothing; and classic scholars know which.

A third remarkable personage, as the reader is aware, then in the court of Tiberius, was the physician whom Tacitus mentioned as being signally eminent in his profession, and who so uninterruptedly maintained the confidence of his employer that, long afterwards, the same historian tells us, he was at that sovereign's deathbed. We mean Charicles.

Shortly after noon the day succeeding the events related in our last chapter, Velleius Paterculus sat working in his own private *triclinium* at his quarters in Rome, when a slave announced Charicles, who was at once admitted. The door being closed, Paterculus perceived that the Greek doctor was unusually discomposed.

"There has just been held a council," said he, "at the palace of Tiberius, about this slaughter of the troops yesterday, these cries for the liberation of the young Athenian lady, the mysterious movements of gladiators in the city, the dissaffection of the army, the known

fact that Germanicus Cæsar believes that Tiberius is the contriver of the abduction, the appeal to Augustus which Germanicus declares he will make——”

“But *is* there any young lady abducted?” interrupted Paterculus.

“My friend,” said Charicles, impressively, “in a case like this a doctor in my position knows *everything*. Such hypocrisy ill becomes you; it would suit a stupid man. Do you suppose I come here to betray you? What service could that render me? What motives govern me in the present matter, think you? The family now in such dire affliction is Greek—nay, Athenian, and I, too, am an Athenian. The Lady Aglais and I have been friends these five-and-twenty years. We played together as children on the banks of the Ilissus. Do you think I am a man made of steel springs and lambskin by a Rhodian machinist? Of that lady’s son, the heroic, the glorious youth, Paulus, I have saved the life. I left Rome and travelled night and day to North Italy to wait upon him. Of his beautiful, interesting, lovely, and lovable sister I have also saved the life; and, by all that is sacred, I hesitated whether I should not poison her instead, and end her woes.”

Paterculus rose, and paced the room in grievous agitation. Charicles added:

“Dionysius, my friend and fellow-townsmen, of whose fame I am more proud than I am to be Cæsar’s physician, would lay that Phœbus-like head of his under the executioner’s axe to save any member of this dear and sorrowing family from harm; and yet I, his friend and their friend—I, an Athenian, who have already

saved both the brother's and the sister's lives—am so mistrusted by you, that you dare not show before me the interest you really feel for them."

"You wrong me," said Paterculus; "but, without meaning harm, men sometimes repeat."

"Bah!" cried the Athenian; "this case is far too serious and terrible for idle gossip on my part. Besides, whose discretion need be less doubted than that of a doctor of my standing?"

"Well, then," said Paterculus, "let us sit down and consult. Take that cushion. We will hold a council as well as Tiberius; and to prove I do not misdoubt you, I will begin it by confessing that I love this very damsel Agatha, and if she can be extricated from her present horrible position, I mean to ask her to be my wife."

"I guessed it," observed Charicles, "for in her ravings she called your name. Tiberius, learning that, after being lodged in Piso's house and visited by that infernal Dame Plancina (to soothe her), she had fallen from fit into fit, and paroxysm into paroxysm, and would surely die if not succored, commanded me forthwith to attend her. I went. Revived by me from a swoon, and hearing who I was, she clung to me, she kissed me, she called me her mother's friend, called me countryman, townsman, and prayed and adjured me to save her. I sent everybody away, and, as delicately as I could, made her understand that, although I might have the courage, I had not physically the power, to take her at once out of that place and restore her to her mother and brother. But I told her I had just returned from Paulus, and had saved his life; that he

had acquired imperishable glory ; that he and the Lady Aglais were coming straight to Rome, and twenty other things by which I cheered the poor child. She actually laughed and clapped her hands, till I could have wept to see her. Dionysius has suggested to me that I might save her by applying something to her face which would destroy her beauty, if she would agree to it; and I know she would, and joyfully."

Paterculus winced, but said :

" Better even that than—"

" *Too late*," exclaimed Charicles, shaking his head ; " you have not yet heard what to-day's council at Tiberius's has decided."

" And, pray, what ? "

" That no young lady has been brought into the Calpurnian house at all, as those ignorant soldiers, merely to injure Tiberius, have, by some designing and ambitious man (say Germanicus), been taught to believe; and to prove this, any respectable person is to be admitted to explore the house to-morrow."

" And where will Agatha be ? "

" Where, indeed ? " echoed Charicles ; " where my remedies won't avail her, I fear. The Tiber hides much."

" Who formed the council ? " asked Velleius, his face ashy pale. " Was Sejanus there ? "

" Perhaps he was," answered Charicles, " and perhaps he was not ; but I'll tell you who was for certain there—the baseborn slave Lygdus, who would cut a man's throat for a *nummus aureus*, a woman's for a *scrupulum*, and a child's for a *denarius*."

"Have you told all this to Dionysius?" asked the Prætorian tribune.

"No, and I would not be so cruel as to tell him. He has already, through Germanicus, appealed to Augustus; but you know the emperor: and now age every day augments his habits of delaying at first, temporizing afterward, and forgetting in the end. No hope, no hope, no hope," cried the Athenian.

"But hope there *is*!" retorted Paterculus, whose peculiar gifts made him a pilot in extremity. "Dionysius has appealed to Augustus; and not knowing all *you* know, naturally trusts that some notice may be taken of his appeal. At least, mark you, it would not surprise him if there were."

"I miss your meaning," said the Greek.

"No matter," returned Paterculus; "you'll understand to-morrow. I once wrote a comedy which failed upon the stage; but I will turn this tragedy into as amusing a comedy as ever was acted in real life."

"You will?"

"As surely as I am speaking. Does Sejanus know that Dionysius has made some communication, through Germanicus Cæsar, to Augustus?"

"I should think he must; in fact, I happen to know he does."

"Then forgive me for asking you to leave me now, and bear a good heart."

When Charicles had gone, Paterculus summoned a trusty slave, called Ergasilus, who could write, but whom he never before had employed as his secretary, and, ordering him to sit at a table where all the necessary materials were laid out, dictated the following

letter, to be indited upon a peculiar and unusual species of paper, which he selected:

“ *Blank* to *Blank* greeting:—

“ You know the enclosed signet. Let it be your warrant to bring with you, the moment you receive this, all necessary force of that special force which is under your authority, and to go immediately to *Blank*, and, there taking into your charge *Blank*, deliver the same, together with the enclosed signet, to *Blank*.

“ Farewell.”

This being written by Ergasilus, Paterculus ordered him to be ready within two hours to take a long journey on horseback, and bear this letter to Naples. He designated the particular horse in his stables to be saddled and ridden by the slave. The man retired to obey these commands; upon which Paterculus wrote another note on the same peculiar species of paper, to a friend of his, a quæstor named Hegio, at Naples, and enclosed an order for a sum of money upon a money-dealer at Naples in favor of Hegio. In this letter Paterculus requested Hegio to detain the slave Ergasilus till a vessel should be sailing for some port in Africa, and then to despatch the slave thither, to buy a horse for Velleius Paterculus, appropriating the money enclosed for the expense of that transaction, including something for Hegio's own trouble. He folded in this letter his own signet-ring. He next filled up the five blanks in the letter written by Ergasilus, after the following manner, taking care to make the handwriting as similar to that of Ergasilus as possible. (If the reader will glance again at that document, and insert, as we give them, the miss-

ing words, he will see into what kind of instrument the letter was converted.)

Blank number one had in it, "Augustus Cæsar."

Blank number two, "Sejanus, prefect."

Blank number three, "the Calpurnian house."

Blank number four, "the damsel Agatha."

And blank number five, "Paulus, tribune of soldiers."

When both letters were folded and ready, Paterculus again summoned the slave Ergasilus, and giving him—not the letter which he had copied, and which Paterculus had safely deposited in a pocket of his own tunic—but the other, told him to sit down and complete his previous task, by adding the superscription, namely, "*V. Paterculus to Hegio the Quæstor,*" etc.

Ergasilus having done this, and being cautioned to be careful with the document, as he might feel that it contained his master's signet-ring (in saying which Paterculus held out his left hand to show the servant that he no longer wore the ornament in question), Vel-leius dismissed him with some ready money, and a renewed order to start upon his errand within one hour.

Ergasilus retired, promising punctual obedience, and then Paterculus went forth in a palanquin, and was borne at once by his own directions to the address (taken by him, of course, the morning they called upon him in his garden) of Josiah Maccabeus and Esther. He found them at home, and gave them the other letter, sealed and folded, exacting a promise that they never would say from whom they received it. He merely added (speaking here to Josiah):

"If you desire the deliverance of little Agatha of the Æmilians, go at once to the house occupied by Dio-

nysius the Athenian, give him this letter, and tell him that not a moment must be lost in handing it personally to Sejanus, the prefect of the Prætorians."

"What will be the effect—the result?" asked Josiah.

"Sejanus will himself forthwith deliver Agatha to her brother Paulus," replied their visitor.

"What Augustus commands," added he prevaricatingly, "Sejanus will at once execute. Nevertheless," he quickly subjoined, "so intertangled are Roman affairs that, should it ever become known that I had any part in this, I should perish, the victim of revenge."

"They may saw me in two before they learn it from me," cried Josiah.

Esther said nothing, but tears streamed from her beautiful eyes.

"I know it well; I know human nature; I understand with whom I have to deal at one moment, with whom at another," said Paterculus, taking a cordial leave of them.

That evening, in a luxurious apartment at the Prætorian quarters, the soft-mannered but dreaded commander of that force was finishing the current business of the day, seated before a table. Pacing the room was his subordinate, Velleius Paterculus. Both were in full military costume, as we described them at the opening of this tale. Soldiers came and went from time to time, bearing messages and receiving orders.

"Rome," said Sejanus, "is in a wonderfully agitated state for such a trifle; but by this time to-morrow, when it is known that this story of some lovely young kinswoman of a favorite among the troops having been car-

ried away and concealed somewhere (they have a rumor now of the very place, that it is in the Calpurnian house—how circumstantial we are getting!)—when it is known that this pretty tale, I say, *is all a myth*, the disturbance will settle down.”

Here Lygdus entered and whispered to Sejanus, who replied aloud :

“Not to be thought of! What do you want with soldiers? It would look exceedingly ill.”

“I assure you, sir,” replied the caitiff, the professional *sicarius*, “very suspicious-looking groups swarm round the place, and all the approaches are watched in a manner which seems exceedingly like method and plan. As the thing cannot be done *there*, and I must take the person away, I fear what may occur.”

“Nonsense!” returned Sejanus. “At all events, I can’t help you further; it would betray everything—it would defeat your own business. Better not employ you at all than that. Why, it would just give a color to all these silly reports. Begone! you command your own dozen of amiable characters in plain clothes, who have long knives, if they have not short swords.”

Lygdus retired, with a look of fright in his ferocious lineaments.

“Ha! ha!” laughed Sejanus, softly; “that is the fellow who loves to be deemed afraid of nothing. My Velleius,” added he, “this is an ugly business. It would never do to let our master go down. But, by the bye, you are too squeamish; one cannot take you always into the details of indispensable transactions.”

“I am content to be ignorant of them,” replied the literary soldier. “But I am told there is something so


serious pending, that Dionysius, the Athenian, has gone to Augustus himself."

"May all Greeks perish!" said Sejanus in a bland voice; and just then an orderly entered, and announced that a messenger from the palace of Augustus Cæsar demanded to see the Prætorian prefect. "Admit him," quoth the Prætorian prefect; and Dionysius, entering silently and gravely, with a stiff and somewhat disdainful bow, handed to Sejanus a large letter, written upon the paper used only by the highest officials, and waited for Sejanus to open and read it. As the prefect opened it, he held to the light a seal-ring which had been enclosed; and at sight of it he rose from his seat at once, and perused the communication standing. He then returned Dionysius's salutation with a slight touch of the Athenian's own distance and loftiness, and said:

"My august master shall be obeyed!" upon which the Greek withdrew without uttering a word. When he had gone, Sejanus sneered. "Augustus is *too late*," he said; "Lygdus is prompt, especially when frightened."



CHAPTER XX.

HE evening of that day was dark and stormy, and the moon had not yet risen, when Paulus (who was leaning against a tree in the Calpurnian garden, gazing at the house in which his beloved sister lay sick, desolate, and despairing) heard, close to him, a low murmur of voices; immediately after which eight or nine men passed near where he stood, without seeing him in the shadow, and hastened towards the house, into which he could just perceive by the dim light that they were admitted. No words could convey the feelings with which he maintained his post for about a quarter of an hour longer, until a figure approached him quietly in the dusk, and he heard Thellus asking, "Are you still there?"

"Yes," he replied; "and I have dreadful news for you. Lygdus, whose voice I immediately recognized, has just passed here, and gone into the house with a gang of ruffians. What can this be for?"

Thellus replied "that the fellow must have entered the garden by the entrance at which he had the last—in fact, only that moment—stationed a watch. No more can enter now," he added; "all the gates of the enclosure are guarded; and we have still thirty men to spare. Let us proceed at once to operations. If they will not open one of the doors of the fortress-like house to our knocking, the last and only resource is to use the combustible materials which we have collected. So soon as they perceive within that the flames are kindled

at one door they will parley, and, upon condition of our extinguishing the fire, will admit us at another."

"That is quite certain," returned Paulus; "and none can leave the house meantime, on any side, without falling into the hands of one or other of our posts."

While they were speaking, about thirty armed men, who had followed Thellus, gathered around them; and Paulus said:

"The wind blows against the face of the house; bring the pitch-barrels to the front door—follow me!"

"Ay! we'll follow; lead on; the barrels are there already."

The assailants, without another word, moved swiftly in a body to the portico of the Calpurnian House, the grounds and garden of which they had secured against the intrusion of any but an overwhelming force.

Within, leaning her bowed head upon her arms, which were stretched crosswise over a marble table, poor Agatha sat alone in the innermost triclinium of the ground floor. A bright lamp burned on the top of a pole in a corner. She had just driven the Lady Plancina out of the room by the incessantly reiterated entreaty, "Leave me, leave me, abhorred woman!" As Lady Plancina retired, she exclaimed, grinding her teeth: "Then be it so; I'll send you a pleasanter companion."

Agatha, when her dreadful hostess had retired, sprang from her settle, ran to the door, and locked it on the inside. This done, she paced the forlorn room, wringing her hands and moaning, till, worn out with fatigue and anguish of body and mind, she flung herself upon the couch, and fell into a miserable slumber filled with dreadful dreams. A loud knocking at the door of the

apartment made her spring from the couch. The knocking continued.

"Who is there?" said she, full of terror.

"Open!"

"Is it Charicles?" she persisted; "but no, he would not knock so rudely, to frighten a helpless girl."

"Open!"

"Who is it?"

"Open!"

"I will not open till you say who it is."

There was a whispering outside, after which a voice answered:

"Open to your doctor; open to Charicles."

With a trembling hand she hastily unlocked the door, which, as she did so, was pushed inward. She saw five or six men standing in the passage, the foremost of whom entered, and at once closed the door again behind him, but without locking it. That man was Lyg-dus. She at once knew her brutal captor, and, indeed, had she never seen him nor been in his cruel power since that afternoon when he had tried to kill her brother with Cneius Piso's sword, she would still have remembered him. She was too weak now to scream, and, besides, knew its inutility. She fell on her knees with clasped hands, and gazed at him wildly. He bade her put on her cloak, as she must take a short journey with him. She seemed not to have heard him. He repeated his command with an oath. She merely continued to stare at him. He shook her roughly by the shoulder. At the touch of his hand she rose, and hastened with a reeling step to the furthest corner of the room, and fell down there, but partly recovered herself

so as to lean against the corner of the wall, where, half-sitting, half-lying on the floor, her beautiful face was changed into a deadly hue; her eyes were wide open and fixed upon Lygdus; her lower jaw had partially dropped. The monster approached her with his fist clinched; but she then suddenly seemed to regain some little strength, for she motioned him away with her right hand, and said, slowly, and with a gasp:

“Paulus, brother dear! why leave your poor Agatha to be so treated?”

At this Lygdus stooped, and struck her on the delicate shoulder, yelling out:

“Perish your brother Paulus!”

Agatha put up a hand to the stricken shoulder, and crouched into the angle of the wall, an object of such helpless terror, refined beauty, simplicity, innocence, and suffering, as would have melted, it might be supposed, the hardest and most ruthless heart that an assassin ever had in his bosom. But Lygdus only seemed to be still more enraged at this affecting spectacle.

He was in the act of repeating the dastardly caitiff blow when he was suddenly arrested by a terrible succession of sounds which he could well understand. It was the rush of footsteps in a distant part of the building, followed by the violent trampling of men to and fro as if in a deadly struggle, the noise of blows exchanged, the shrieks of women, cries, curses, a loud shout from many voices, and all the tumult of a sudden and desperate conflict. The tenderest claims of pity, the most touching pleas of compassion, had been unable to move the heart of Lygdus against his love of cruelty; but there was one thing before which his lust

of cruelty instantly gave way, and that was his cowardly love for his own precious carcass. Leaving his victim where she crouched, he crept to the door on tiptoe, placed his ear at it in a bent attitude, and listened to the uproar which perceptibly swayed nearer and nearer. Lygdus opened the door and peered forth, just as the tumult rolled and thundered into the passage itself. Slamming the door hastily fast again, Lygdus locked it inside, and, retreating to the middle of the chamber, drew from the breast of his tunic a long knife, and thus waited. Not long had he to wait; a brief combat seemed to take place outside; a heavy body or two were heard as if roughly flung upon the ground, and then the door itself was sharply struck with some metal instrument, while, above the din, a voice which sent a thrill from the crown of Agatha's head to the soles of her feet rang clearly out, crying: "Sister dear, be not alarmed; help has come; it is Paulus who knocks."

Agatha raised her eyes toward heaven, but could not speak; and Lygdus, of course, remained silent, knife in hand, as we have described him.

One moment's pause, as if those without were listening for some answer, ensued; and then the door literally leaped from the hinge-side and the lock-side simultaneously inward, and Paulus, armed, stood on the threshold, with Thellus, Chærias, and Longinus behind him, all armed, too, and having dreadful stains moist on their weapons. There was a strong light in the room. One glance revealed a history. Agatha put up both hands to her eyes to hide the scene which immediately followed; but the fearful fascination of it overmastered her, and she gazed on it spellbound. Thus she beheld

the encounter between Lygdus and her brother. They met neither at the door nor where Lygdus had been standing expectant; the assassin, now desperate, making a spring like that of a wild beast, and bringing, at the same time, the long knife he carried with a downward, searching, and ravenous blow, scientifically aimed at Paulus's bare throat above the breastbone.

The young tribune had neither waited for nor in any way evaded the assault, nor yet had he, like the other, sprung in the air; but with quiet, unfrowning brow, and his large eyes turned upon his enemy, he made one stride forward to meet the panther-like rush, caught in his left hand the right arm of Lygdus, before the well aimed blow was delivered, and nearly wrenched it from the shoulder, causing him by the sheer pain of the grip to drop his knife, and flinging him fairly against the side wall, across the whole width of the chamber.

There Lygdus lay, astonished and still; while Paulus ran forward and knelt by his sister's side, taking her fair young head in both hands, and kissing her again and again. Thellus, following, and seeing on the couch a large, woolen mantle or wrapper, took it, and, stooping down also by Agatha's side, with Paulus's aid, raised her gently, folded the mantle round her, leaving uncovered only the face (now smiling, and down which welcome tears were at last streaming), and took the young maiden in his arms as if he had been her father, or, indeed, as a mother might carry her child.

"Lead on," said Paulus.

Upon which Thellus moved swiftly to the door, Paulus following, and Chærias and Longinus making way. In the corridor Paulus called Chærias and some

of the armed men to form the advance along with himself, and bade Longinus and the others march behind Thellus, who, with his burden, was thus protected on every side. They quickly emerged from the house. Thellus, on the way, explaining to Agatha, who seemed as light as a baby in his mighty arms, that a female slave had admitted them (through downright terror) into the house only after they had set fire to a pitch-barrel in the porch; that they had experienced even some trouble in extinguishing the flames; and that she would see the smouldering of burnt wood as they passed. He occupied her attention in this way to prevent her from noticing the traces of the late struggle.

As they passed through the garden they were silently encompassed by groups of armed men till they arrived through clumps of trees at a postern in the wall.

"Whither are we going?" asked Agatha.

"To your mother," whispered Thellus.

The young girl closed her eyes, and actually slept in the warlike man's arms.

Just as Chærias was opening the postern, the measured tramp of soldiery (and apparently in vast numbers, too) was heard in the street outside, as well as words of command not to be mistaken, given in cautious tones by the officers to the men. Paulus looked uneasy. Chærias hastily closed the postern, announcing that the whole street was lined with Prætorians. "Let us hasten," said Thellus, "to the other side of the garden." Arriving there, they found exactly the same phenomenon. "There is yet another door," whispered one of the gladiators, "leading toward the Esquiline and the Prænestina road." They hurried thither, but before they could reach it they

became aware that soldiers were now in the garden itself, and that the whole place was regularly beleaguered. Retracing their footsteps in extreme anxiety toward a thicket, they saw torches in front of them, and perceived that they were intercepted ; and at this moment the horrible fact became evident that in every part of the enclosure, near the middle of which they had taken refuge in a little shrubbery, torches were flaring and troops swarming ; and that, like a drag-net which is being closed in, the soldiers, under some intelligent and intended plan, were converging from all sides toward the centre.

"Eheu! eheu!" (alas! alas!) cried young Paulus ; "our last hour has come ! Men, will you stand by me and this innocent maiden ? "

"To the death!" they answered.

"Who goes there?" called out some one, close at hand, in the tones of an educated man.

Paulus stepped to the front. "Honest people," said he.

"Methinks," returned the same person, "that I ought to know that voice. Are you not Paulus, the new tribune ? "

"Yes," said he, "and who are you?"

"I am in search of you," replied the other ; "but primarily in search of your sister, the young daughter of the Æmilians."

"What would you with us ? "

"I have the orders of Augustus Cæsar to deliver her into your hands."

The astonishment of Paulus and of those around him may be conceived.

"She is already in my hands," he said, after a mo-

ment's bewilderment. The other approached, surrounded by soldiers who carried torches, and Paulus saw that he had been parleying with no less a personage than the dreaded Sejanus himself.

This personage, having satisfied himself by a glance, first at the young tribune, and then at the pale and lovely face of Agatha (who had awoke only to faint completely in Thellus's arms), smiled, and remarked that he had brought a palanquin for the damsel, and that she was still welcome to it. Thellus had very soon placed her tenderly therein; and Sejanus, having issued some order, which ran in echoes from officer to officer till it died along the distant battalions, laid his hand lightly on the shoulder of Paulus, who was moving away, and said: "I have still a commission to perform, young sir; this signet is to be remitted to you. You seem to have gained favor in a very high quarter indeed."

Paulus had his mind too full of other thoughts to pay more attention, either to the object handed to him or to Sejanus's words, than just to say "Thank you," and to take the ring. Away then moved in separate directions the two processions; that of the soldiery to their various quarters, and that which had rescued the young maiden to the lodgings of the Lady Aglais.

It was midnight when the mother, who was waiting in indescribable suspense the outcome of that evening's expedition, clasped her daughter in her arms.

About two hours later, while it was still dark, Sejanus, in obedience to a sudden and imperiously-worded summons, had left his bed, and was standing in the presence of Tiberius Cæsar.

"To the world at large," said Tiberius, "I am entirely ignorant of what may have befallen a certain damsel, ignorant where she is, disdainful of all that concerns her or hers. But you have been my confidant; you have been in all my secrets. How comes, then, this inexplicable and monstrous account which has reached me, on such authority that, perforce, I must believe it? Have you or have you not, delivered a certain damsel from a certain most respectable and noble house?"

"My sovereign, I have."

"And in this most extraordinary proceeding, have you, or have you not, used the armed public force under your command?"

"Cæsar, I have."

"And, pray, why am I not, from this moment, to cast you off as an enemy and traitor, dangerous to me, treacherous and audacious beyond all conception, and certainly ungrateful beyond forgiveness?"

"My Cæsar, I merely obeyed the express orders of Augustus, who sent me as my warrant his signet-ring."

Tiberius sank upon a couch, and visions of Rhodes, to which he had once before been banished for years by Augustus, rose before his mind.

"Augustus, then, knows all," he exclaimed. "Who brought his signet-ring to you?"

"Dionysius the Athenian."

After a few minutes of reflection, Tiberius resumed:

"The conclusion of this whole business is, that Cneius Piso has been guilty of a flagitious offence. So have you, if any participation in it can be traced to you. You must, between you, bear the blame and the

penalties (if any come); he chiefly, you partly; and I will enable you both to bear them. As for Lygdus, he must be put to death sooner or later; it would not be amiss if it were now; but we need him still for Germanicus; at least, I, of course, need him not; but Plancina and Cneius Piso say that he is necessary to them for their plans about that pernicious pretender. Observe this: he must have a round sum of money, this Lygdus, and disappear for a time. With regard to young Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, and his mother and sister, I will load them with favors; everything which has occurred to them is entirely forgotten; in fact, nothing whatever has occurred to them, so far as I am concerned. I admire them extremely; I like them very much. I have not had, I say, any share in it, and I have not even had so much as any knowledge of their troubles. None whatever. I am completely and absolutely ignorant of everything which has aggrieved them. But this I will say, that Augustus has been rather ungrateful and unjust to the only son of the brave officer who served him so well at Philippi; as he was indeed to that officer himself. So far from taking away the property of the family, Augustus ought to have bestowed a new estate upon them."

"I understand," replied Sejanus.

"With this understanding," concluded Tiberius, "that is, with the understanding that I condemn and reprobate the conduct of Cneius Piso, and yours too, if it can be proved; you are still my trusty Sejanus. Go! Farewell."

Sejanus took his leave respectfully and gravely, but rode back through the streets grinning all the way.

CHAPTER XXI.



NE morning, about a week later, when Paulus showed his mother and sister the signet-ring remitted to him by Sejanus, adding that it was wonderful it had not been reclaimed by Augustus, and that he now would ask Dionysius, or some one, to give it back to the emperor, the ladies laughed, and told him the history of the ring presented by the triumvir Lepidus to Agatha. But this could not quite explain what had occurred. Agatha mentioned that Esther Maccabeus was to have shown the locket to Velleius Paterculus. Ultimately, by carefully piecing together various circumstances, they understood that Velleius Paterculus himself must have contrived the rescue; and that Augustus never wrote a certain remarkable letter to Sejanus at all. But as Dionysius, and, indeed, Germanicus Cæsar, were known to have appealed to the Emperor, both Tiberius and Sejanus would naturally believe that the Emperor had really intervened. Hence the impunity of Thellus and of the gladiators; hence the absolute abstention not only from all further molestation of the family, but from all inquiry into the circumstances of Agatha's romantic deliverance.

The family were not only at peace for the reasons just stated, but they were now wealthy. We have already mentioned that Augustus had given them the estate of Pausilypum (which Vedius Pollio, the eater of slave-fed lampreys, had bequeathed to the emperor), instead of the Æmilian property on the Liris. But sur-

prise followed surprise. Some relatives of Tiberius and of Germanicus, as the reader knows, were in possession of the Liris estate; and (finding Germanicus willing) Tiberius sent word to Paulus that, as he might naturally prefer the inheritance of his forefathers to a strange property, and as the value of each was nearly the same, he would exchange with Paulus if he wished. The offer was eagerly accepted; the lawyers drew the necessary reciprocal conveyances; and the wanderers, as soon as they could complete their preparations and purchases, went to settle in that great castle upon the Liris, which had attracted their admiration the very first evening of their arrival in Latium, and within sight of which (as the reader remembers, at the opening of this narrative) they had been all arrested by order of no other than the man who now, liberally and considerately, put them in possession of the mansion where the ever-burning brazier had cast its glimmer upon the Lares of so many generations of their own ancient and famous Æmilian line.

The beautiful ladies, Agrippina Julia and Agrippina Marcella, had left in the castle some elegant fixtures and even movables (including certain pictures and the statues on the roof), which they gave, at a nominal price, to Germanicus's favorite staff-officer. Claudius (in whose stead Paulus had ridden Tiberius's untamable horse) had by this time been wedded to little Benigna; and the incoming proprietors of the neighboring property easily prevailed on the newly-married couple to live with them; the husband as a sort of steward, who should oversee all the out-door slaves, and could, when Paulus wished, act ably as his secretary,

too; and the wife as the housekeeper, with supreme authority over all the indoor servants.

Crispus and Crispina often found time (and made it) to stroll over the fields for a visit to the castle; and for a loving talk with the lord and the ladies whom they deemed without their parallels upon earth. Moreover, Agatha had persuaded Josiah Maccabeus and Esther not to leave them just when their far wanderings, wild adventures, and dreadful trials had come to so happy a term. Esther had conceived a tender affection for the beautiful damsel whom she had been largely instrumental in saving from so dire a fate, and delivering out of so appalling a captivity, while Agatha returned this feeling with enthusiasm. She spared no eloquence, then, to persuade Maccabeus and his lovely daughter to postpone their return to Syria—till when? Here it was that Paulus appeared in a new character, that of a more consummate orator than Dionysius himself. He stated that he had formed so sublime an estimate of Josiah's ancestors that he could not be happy till he was able to read the Book of Maccabees in Hebrew; and he urged arguments so touching that Josiah (who really had far more urgent reasons for quitting Eleazar than for immediately returning to Jerusalem) consented to stay until he had instructed Paulus in the language of the Patriarchs and the Prophets. In this course of study, Paulus gradually discovered that Esther taught him more effectually than her father knew how. But what learnt he from the sweet mouth and wondrous Eastern eyes of the noble maiden who had saved his sister? He really learnt Hebrew; and as it was the exploits of her own glorious ancestors which she was

expounding to one who could well appreciate them, the sympathy and enthusiasm which they shared together knit their hearts into a fond, a natural, and a complete unison. The Lady Aglais, as she contemplated a youth and a maiden whose spirits were not unworthy of each other thus occupied, saw far beyond, as she imagined, what either of those students dreamt of anticipating; and saw it with satisfaction.

Philip, the old freedman of the family, was installed at Liridium, as it was called, in a capacity not unlike that of the seneschal of subsequent ages. Melena, the slave, received her freedom, but would not practically take it; and she remained the special personal servant of the Lady Aglais. Paulus pressed Thellus to give up the army (for which Paulus would get him permission) and settle near them, with his daughter Prudentia, in a little cottage which stood about two miles down the river, surrounded by rhododendrons, oleanders and myrtles, and which, being part of Paulus's new property, he earnestly begged Thellus to accept from him as a gift.

"But," said Thellus, after thanking him, "you have not quitted the army yet yourself; and why should I? Germanicus vows, I am told, that he will never rest till he has found the bones of Varus and his legions, and given them solemn burial. I mean to be at the funeral, and so must you."

"Well, if we come back safe," persisted Paulus, "you will settle near us in that cottage with your daughter, and eat fresh fish of your own catching for breakfast."

And so it was agreed. But for a while there were

no more wars, and during the lull many visitors came to Liridium. Among them, poor Longinus never came; he had been foolish enough to fall in love with Agatha, and, deeming his love hopeless, avoided the family altogether. Dionysius had been persuaded to give up his pretty miniature mansion in Rome, and pass altogether under the roof of his beloved friends (who, indeed, owed the place to him) the remainder of his sojourn in Italy; for to Athens he had resolved to return, and—*nescius futuri*—in Athens to live and to die. Another person who, during the lull between German wars, frequently came now to Liridium, was the accomplished Velleius Paterculus. Esther assured Agatha that she knew why Paterculus appeared so frequently and made himself so agreeable—although so handsome a man, of so fine a position, with manner so distinguished, and a reputation so considerable, and who, besides, talked so well, could hardly be otherwise. But in telling Agatha that she knew why he came so often, Esther adopted a certain demureness, a certain significance, which was meant, in an innocent and loving sense, to tease as well as please—and did. Agatha's repudiation of even the possibility of what was thus lawlessly hinted was one day overwhelmingly refuted by Velleius Paterculus himself, who, truth to tell, had been making love to the young lady assiduously, and who, on the day in question, after being roundly accused by her of having contrived her deliverance from Tiberius and from the Calpurnian House, asked her to be his wife with her mother's and brother's consent. As it happened that the invitation thus proffered was the first that Agatha Æmiliana ever received, and as she was very

young and inexperienced, she behaved most absurdly in her own estimation, but charmingly in his. She burst into tears; and when he timidly and gently inquired whether he had hurt her feelings or offended her, declared that he had never done anything of the sort. The witty suitor then remarked, gravely smiling, that she had addressed an inquiry to him which only a husband could answer, but the answer to which he would be most happy to give to his wife. But Aglais objected that, as her son would frequently be away from her with the army, if her daughter were taken away at the same time she would be on a sudden left desolate; and, while consenting to the marriage, begged that it might be postponed for a time. To this Paterculus submitted, and Agatha joyfully agreed.

Meanwhile, Paulus made such progress in Hebrew that Josiah Maccabeus and Esther began again to talk of their voyage to Jerusalem; and now occurred an important event, indeed, in the young tribune's life.

He told Aglais, his mother, that he had fallen in love with Esther; reminded her of Esther's noble and successful efforts to save their darling Agatha; expatiated on her grand and wondrous old lineage; and asked his mother, finally, whether she could wish for her son a lovelier, more graceful, more gentle, or more high-hearted wife? Not one of the many propositions advanced by Paulus was denied by his mother. Paulus then confessed that, from that night of strange adventure, so singularly spent by him and Thellus and the rest of his comrades at Eleazar's queer house (once Julius Cæsar's) in the Suburra, when Esther's timely warnings had not only preserved the public treasure, but had saved

the lives of all the gallant men engaged in a most critical service—from that night he confessed he had felt such admiration for the Hebrew damsel that not only he thought of her continually in moments of tranquillity, but her image had even gone into the din of battle by his side.

“Then she may well walk with you through life, my son,” said the Greek lady; “and truly I consider her a virtuous, gifted, and noble maiden, whom I shall be glad to call daughter.”

Paulus kissed his mother, and said he merely wished for a betrothal of a year or two, like Agatha’s with Vel-leius Paterculus, as there were rumors of impending German expeditions, and he would neither like to miss them, on the one hand, nor to leave his wife for them, on the other.

“But will she accept me, mother?” he suddenly asked, with a look of alarm.

“We have accepted Paterculus for Agatha,” returned his mother; “and certainly, for that simple and excellent old Hebrew and his daughter, your offer is a much more flattering distinction than that of Paterculus is for us. And, on the other hand, I am certain that Esther entertains a very tender feeling toward you. She is happy when you are here, and when you are absent so is she—in another sense.”

Thus encouraged, Paulus Lepidus Æmilius, the brilliant young hero, whose name was in all men’s mouths, and who was fashioned by nature to be adopted into the kinship of such a race as that of Esther’s glorious collateral ancestor, asked her to be his wife, and to share his large and rising fortunes.

Esther turned pale, raised both hands, with the fingers interlaced, to her chin, and cast her eyes upon the ground for a few seconds without speaking. She then said:

“Ah! it cannot be. And now, indeed, my grandfather and I must go away. But it is not through unkindness; it is not for want. Your sister is truly a sister to me already, as you would fain make her; and your mother is to me even like my own. Nor am I blind to this great honor. But the laws of my people and our holy books forbid me to wed a Gentile. Yet this believe, that you and yours will always be dear to Esther; and Esther will never kneel to that great God, who made you as well as her, and who cares for all the creatures of his hands, without praying to him for Aglais, for Agatha, and especially for you, valiant and gentle Paulus. I trust we may meet in a better world.”

Almost while uttering the last word, which she pronounced in a tremulous voice and with indescribable pathos, she turned and slowly left him.

He forebore pursuit, because the whole manner and tone of the Jewish maiden carried to his mind an overwhelming conviction that her answer was truly final, and that she spoke irrevocable words.

In the midst of his natural youthful anguish, two things in what she had said struck him much. She had referred to the one great God, of whom Dionysius always maintained the certain, present, personal, and sovereign sway; and her language, when deeply moved, was as unlike to that of the polytheists around him as the speech of men to the chattering of monkeys. There was the same conviction as that in Dionysius's philoso-

phy ; only with more trust, more familiarity, more devotedness, more feeling, more light, more love, and more distinctness and tenderness. With this great belief, she clearly held, also, that we should live hereafter. In the next place, what could the " holy books of her people " mean by " Gentile " ?

Through the storm of his thoughts these queries came and went. The very next day Esther and her grandfather left the castle on the Liris ; and sunshine left the world. A character less selfish than Paulus it would be hard to imagine ; yet neither mother nor sister, nor the arrangements for Agatha's future, nor the roll of great events which soon caught him in its eddies, nor time itself, could restore to him the buoyancy which he lost in a conversation of a few minutes with a noble and gentle girl, and never quite regained.

Brilliant matches for Paulus were planned by Aglais and Agatha, in concert with Paterculus, who induced the family to live part of every year in Rome, for the better accomplishment of their designs. It was not with contempt, so much as utter indifference, that Paulus turned invariably away at the bare hint of an alliance with any lady, or of his marriage at all. The pleasures of society, the attractions of the circus, the gossip of the court, seemed equally tasteless to him. There was no zest for him in the command of money—none in the consideration paid to him by great personages—none in the popularity he enjoyed among the soldiers—none even in the glory of fame. He always met Thellus with pleasure and cordiality ; and he enjoyed the conversation of Dionysius, who (still living with the family) had accompanied them to town. With Charicles, also, he showed

an interest in conferring ; and he used, whenever they were at leisure, to engage both these Greeks to discuss before him the immortality of the soul from different points of view. Though a physician, and a pagan physician, Charicles was too able a man not to see that there was something in each human being which shared in nowise in the mutations of the flesh ; *and that the consciousness of personal identity either was an illusion, or the existence of this immutable essence in each of us was a fact.* He called it his *chemical proof* of the deathless thing which thinks ; and he developed it in the most beautiful and convincing as well as humorous manner. This, and Dionysius's demonstrations of the same fact, on both metaphysical and moral grounds, were now Paulus's only real delight.

To his mother and sister he was as gentle, as tender, as devoted as ever ; but there was a languor, a melancholy, in his whole bearing which smote them to the heart.

One night, returning on foot, with Charicles and Dionysius, from a party at Germanicus Cæsar's, where the commander-in-chief had unexpectedly warned Paulus to hold himself in readiness for new wars, they met four soldiers carrying a corpse on a trestle to a neighboring dead-house. Paulus happened to know one of the soldiers by sight, and asked, mechanically, whose was the corpse. At this the bearers stopped, and a fifth soldier, who bore a torch, uncovered the face and held the light over it, saying, "The unhappy young knight was accidentally killed half an hour ago, in a drunken brawl at a wine-shop."

Charicles hurried Paulus away, and said, "I know

the face. It is that of your cousin Marcus. He has led a mad and a bad life with young Caligula and Herod Agrippa. Now that he is dead, there is no harm in telling you what your mother and sister and your uncle all knew, but kept from your knowledge—that he was partly the cause of Agatha's abduction from Monte Circello. Ah, well! he has paid for it."

Paulus shuddered a little, saying, "I wonder is he still living anywhere?"

"Still upon that theme?" replied Charicles. "Is there nothing, then, in this whole world that can interest you? Here is my street. *Vale.*"

As Dionysius and Paulus pursued their walk, Paulus said, "The Jews also believe, like you and the Sibyls, that we shall meet those for whom we care in another world. I wonder whether the Great New Teacher who is to come in this our own generation will teach the same."

"Really, my friend," replied the Greek, "I am glad you will have something to turn your attention in this new German war. *Est modus in rebus.* Forget yonder Hebrew lady; think of her as if dead."

"It is just what I do," said Paulus, with a melancholy smile.



CHAPTER XXII.

THE war came ; Germanicus, with a fine army, in which Paulus served as tribune, penetrated the heart of Germany, won several battles, turned westward, found the place where Varus lost the legions, and where the earth was yet white with their unburied bones, and raised a plain monument over them to commemorate the avenging victories of Rome. Returning from these exploits, in which Paulus had largely increased his already high reputation and had acquired the rank of legatus, or full general, Germanicus was dispatched to the East, with the local power and dignity of emperor assigned to him, and with Cneius Piso (who was attended by his wife Plancina and by Lygdus) attached to his person under some indefinite commission from Tiberius.

Time was fast rolling forward, not only with the characters, sweet and bitter, sordid or noble, execrable or lovely, of this distant echo—this personal story—but with the Roman Empire itself, as then it stood in its pride and its darkness (torchlight, as it were, illumining the face of the giant statue from below, and clouds resting on its head) ; time was fast running its race. Augustus Cæsar had died at Nola, asking those around his bed to give him the applause customary at theatres when a performer is finishing his part ; and Tiberius had begun his awful sway with moderation, wisdom, and amenity.

When Paulus returned, he assisted in his new rank

and honors at his sister Agatha's marriage with Velleius Paterculus, which entailed but little separation from her mother and brother, Paterculus having bought, some miles more to the south on the Appian Road, for his future residence, a villa, once Cicero's (one of the sixteen or eighteen he possessed along that line), and settled there with his wife. Between the castle and the villa communication was easy to maintain; and mother and daughter often visited each other. Thellus, who had attained the grade of first centurion, now quitted the army, and went with his little Prudentia to live in the riverside cottage which Paulus had persuaded them to accept. Marcus Lepidus the triumvir was dead, and had bequeathed his Thessalian dogs to Paulus, and the bewitched castle, as it was not unnaturally deemed, with the estate of Monte Circello, to the Lady Aglais. Dionysius had gone back to his Athenian home. Of Josiah Maccabeus and Esther no tidings had ever been heard, save one grateful and loving letter from Esther to Agatha, received while Paulus was at the wars. Germanicus Cæsar had been poisoned at Daphne; and Cneius Piso (suspected of the deed by Germanicus's troops) had returned to Rome, where Tiberius, to show that Piso could not have been his agent in such a transaction, threw him into prison. There Piso, being astonished at the requital his master gave to his devoted services, closed a year of despair in suicide. His wife, the Lady Plancina, braved the plain opinion of men for thirteen years longer, when she was at last arrested upon the same charge, and inflicted upon herself the same death in similar despair.

And now Tiberius had begun to rage; in other words,

to be natural ; in other words, to be unpleasant to mankind. The ladies of Rome admired no man's appearance more than Paulus's when business, or courtesy, or the policy which was very needful in the reign of Tiberius, obliged him to show himself publicly in the capital, wearing the long scarlet paludamentum in the train of the plainly dressed, unsmiling, suspicious, inscrutable, and murderous tyrant.

It was a summer night when Paulus had returned from one of these journeys to Rome, and he was walking with his mother among the beautiful statues, which were described by us at the beginning of this tale as grouped like a perpetual company on the flat roof of his great ancestral mansion. The night was magnificent, the air full of the perfumes of flowers, and the landscape lay in all its beauty below, stretching north and south to the horizon, eastward to the Apennines, and on the western side to the Tyrrhenian Sea, which seemed to-night to take down all the starry heavens into its heart.

"See, mother," said Paulus, "all that has been restored to us, and all beyond ; this fair Italy of my father's fathers, where we have again built up the old name in honor ! How inexplicable life is ! We use fierce exertions to attain things, of which, when we possess them, we know no better use to make than to abandon them. But really it becomes necessary to get beyond the ken of Tiberius. You do not repent, mother, this resolution of ours to sell everything, retire from public life, and steal off to the Greece from which you brought me in my youth ?"

"I repent of nothing which can render you happy," she replied.

"Alas!" said he, "I could have wished to keep all this wealth and dignity if Esther—but I will not go back. As for you, mother, you are Greek, and it is only for my sake you have ever preferred Italy. We shall depart wealthy at least."

And thus the estates, both of Monte Circello and Liridium, were sold, the former to Lucius Varius, the patrician poet, the latter to Agatha's husband, Paterculus, to whom Agatha had borne a son. Paterculus called the child Paulus Æmilius; so that, after all, Liridium would still remain bound up with the ancient patronymic, and in possession of the ancient race. The only pang incurred was the separation from Agatha; but better so, Agatha herself agreed, than that her brother (like so many other noble and innocent daily and almost hourly victims) should fall under the caprice of the pitiless man who then held a whole world in terror.

Paulus and his mother flitted away then, and were welcomed in Athens by Dionysius, whom they found encompassed by such fame and reverence as no man had gathered round him in that metropolis of genius and wit since the days of Socrates. He taught in the Areopagus (then consisting of forty assistant, and about twenty honorary, chiefly Roman, members) a philosophy of which the reader knows already the principal tenets. With this he mingled a certain strange and poetical-looking element, derived from a study of the Sibylline oracles. It would be in discord, we fear, with the laws of a narrative like this, to expect (while the reader awaits the remaining events which we have to chronicle) his

attention to the full exposition of that most curious of all the episodical accompaniments of ancient heathen history. We will not, therefore, break our tale to unfold this topic in the manner it would intrinsically deserve; hoping in some future edition to speak of it in a preface or appendix, succinctly, yet sufficiently. It is enough here to say, in a short space, that whether from the fact that our blessed Lord was then actually living, or (as Dionysius in good faith told Paulus) from a well-known Sibylline prophecy, certain it is that his incommunicable earthly name had transpired beyond the confines of Judea.

No reader, indeed, of competent acquirements would fail to find his trouble and curiosity rewarded were he to look at the private Basle edition of the *Sibylline Oracles*, published in 1544, by John Oparinus in that town, and edited by Xystus Bethuleius. It contains that most wonderful acrostic which became a subject of critical disquisition with a host of great thinkers and celebrated authors during four successive centuries after the generation wherein Dionysius is represented by us as telling Paulus his opinions. We allude to the acrostic beginning:

Ἰδρωσί δὲ χθὼν κρίσεως σημεῖον ὄτ' ἔσται.

This acrostic Lactantius* unhesitatingly identifies with the same concerning which Cicero (who rendered its meaning so far as he understood an enigma to be solved by the event alone) defended the Sibyls from the charge of uttering senseless or random oracles. Saint Augustine of Hippo translated it (and his version survives); Theophilus (seventh bishop of Antioch, dating from St.

* Fourth book, *De Vera Sapientia*, chap. xv.

Peter); St. Justin, philosopher and martyr; Origen (seventh book, ag. Celsus, p. 516); Eusebius (chap. 18), and other weighty authorities, all treat this acrostic as identical with the one discussed by Cicero and by Varro before the birth of our Redeemer. Natalis Alexander accepts the same position.* That all this was a "pious fraud," invented three hundred years afterward, is an explanation which our readers would not thank us here for discussing; but which, were this the proper place, and were we sure of carrying with us the attention of those for whose satisfaction we are writing, we believe we could demonstrate to be historically and critically untenable.

Be that as it may, the initial letters of the acrostic spell our blessed Lord's two names† all down the lines, like a golden fringe, and relate his life and death in the text, darkly and briefly. We will quit the subject by merely asking, if it is a pious fraud that the Sibyls predicted a *Redeemer of mankind, born of a Virgin, just about to appear*, what mean the well-known lines in the 4th eclogue of Virgil—

"Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas ;

* * * * *

Jam redit et Virgo,"?

If Virgil was a flatterer of his patrons, were the Sibyls so? Was their meaning the same as that of Virgil's politeness?

This brief digression was essential to the issue of our present narrative, to which we now return.

* The passage to which we allude in Cicero will be found in *De Divinatione*, lib. ii. numbers 111 and 112. See also the 4th eclogue of Virgil.


† *ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ, ΣΩΤΗΡ.*

Paulus and his mother were entertained hospitably, as was usual among the Athenians, and "tasted salt" in every house which they would care to enter. They took a little villa near Athens, where Dionysius, and a lady called Damarais, who had known Aglais when both were girls, passed most of their evenings in witty and wise conversation during many peaceful years. Paulus was now past thirty-eight, and had never either felt tempted to marry or forgotten the Syrian girl who had refused to share his fortunes when they began to dawn so splendidly. He had studied the "holy books" which Esther had stated to be the cause of her refusal, and there he found not only a religion and a code of morals worthy of the name, but, above all, the long series of predictions concerning him who was to embrace all nations in one flock, and abolish such barriers as had sundered him so cruelly from the love of his youth.

At last some change of scene and occupation became necessary to him, and his yearning remembrance determined the direction in which it should be made. The mother and son said adieu to Dionysius, to Damarais, and to Athens, and embarked in a Cretan vessel for Syria.



CHAPTER XXIII.

T was early morning, in the thirty-second year of the Christian era, when a handsome, soldier-like, and majestic man, wearing the costume of a Roman legatus, or general, stood on Mount Olivet, southeast-by-east of Jerusalem. He was looking west. The Syrian sun had climbed out of the Arabian sands behind him, and it flung his tall shadow level and far over the scanty herbage among the numerous sad-colored twigs of the olive-shrub. Opposite, just below him, across the deep ravine of the Kedron brook, better known by the awful name attached to that with which it blends, "The Jehoshaphat Vale," shone the fiery splendor of God's temple. Its glorious eastern front, here milk-white with marble, there breast-plated with gold, its pinnacles of gold, its half-Greek, half-Roman architecture capriciously and fancifully varied by the ornate genius of the Asiatic builders whom Herod the Idumæan had employed, were of a character to arrest the least curious eye, and to fill the most stupid and indifferent spectator with astonishment and admiration. And yet this was but the second temple—how inferior to, how different from, the first!

" . . . Underneath him, fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers;
And higher yet the glorious temple reared
Her pile, far-off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, tipt with golden spires."

This was Mount Moria, the hill of God. On the left, as the Roman general gazed, facing westward, was

Mount Zion, the city of David, now the palace of Herod the tetrarch, encompassed by the mansions of Hebrew nobles.

“Here I stand at last,” thought Paulus, “after so many checkered fortunes, looking down upon the most beautiful, the most dazzling, and the most mysterious of cities! To see Rome thus may be the lot of an eagle as it soars over it, but has never been granted to human eyes. And even could Rome be viewed in this way, it would want the unity, the whiteness. Ah! strange city! Wondrous Mount of Zion! wondrous Hill of Moria! wonderful temple! Not temple of Jupiter, or of Venus, or of Janus, or of this or that monster or hero, but Temple, say they, of God! *The Temple of God!* What a sound the words have! What a sound! Homer’s Iliad, from beginning to end, is not so sublime as this one phrase, this tremendous and dread appellation. And there it stands, flaming against the morning sun, in green marble below, in white marble above, in breastplates and pinnacles of gold; too proud to receive even light without repayment, and flinging floods of it back. And this is the land of the prophets whom I have at last read; yonder, beyond the wall, north, is Jeremias’ grotto! This, too, is the age, the time, the day, the hour, to which they all point, when the God of whom they speak, and of whom the Sibyls also sang, is to come down into a visibly ruined and corrupted world, and to perform that which to do is in itself surely Godlike.

“But one thing is dark even in the glooms of mystery. How can a God suffer?—be thwarted, be overcome, at least apparently so, by his own creatures, and

these the very worst of them ? What can these cries of grief and horror, which the prophets utter, mean ? ”

As Paulus thus mused, half-pronouncing now and then in words the thoughts we have sketched, and hundreds upon hundreds of similar thoughts, which we spare to record, some one passed him, going down the Mount of Olives, and in passing looked at him ; and until Paulus died he never ceased to see that glance, and in dying he saw it yet, and with a smile thanked his Maker that he saw it then also—especially then.

The person who thus passed our hero was more than six feet in height. He was fair in complexion. His hair was light auburn, and large locks of it fell with a natural wave and return upon his neck. His head was bare. His dress was the long, flowing robe of the Jews, girdled at the waist, and, as Paulus afterward fancied, the color of it was red. He was in the bloom of life. Our hero could see, as this person passed, that he was the very perfection of health, beauty, vigor, elegance, and of all the faculties of physical humanity ; and even the odd, and strange, and wild, and somewhat mysterious thought flashed through Paulus’s mind :

“ My God,” thought he, “ if there were a new Adam to be created, to be the natural, or rather the supernatural, king of the human race, would not his appearance surely be as the appearance and the bearing of this person ? ”

And the person who passed was moreover thin, and a little emaciated. And he would have seemed wan, only that the most delicate, faint blood-color mantled in his cheeks. And he looked at the hero Paulus with the look of him out of whose hand none hath power to take

those whom he picks from a vast concourse and elects. And Paulus felt glad, and calm, and without anxiety for the future, and free from all bitterness for the past, and firm, yet grave; and, when his mind went actually forth to look upon the things that were around it, he saw nothing but the face and the glance.

And now I come to the strangest particular of all. Paulus felt that this beautiful and vigorous new Adam, fit to be the natural and even supernatural king of the world, was one who never could have laughed, and probably had never smiled. But no smile was so sweet as his gravity. And Paulus remembered another extraordinary and unparalleled circumstance. It was this: those beautiful and benignant eyes were so full of terror that it seemed they could scarcely hold in an equal degree any other expression in them except that which shone therein with what seemed to Paulus a celestial and divine lustre; I mean, first, love, and, next, unconquerable and everlasting and victorious courage. As though there was a work to do which none but he (from the creation to the day of doom) could ever accomplish—a dreadful work, a work unspeakable in shame, and in pain, and in horror, and yet a work entirely indispensable, and the most important and real and momentous that had ever been performed. And the subject or hero of this tale, Paulus, wondered how in the same look and eyes, and in a single glance of them, two things so opposite as ineffable terror and yet Godlike, adorable courage could be combined.

But, nevertheless, they were both there; and with this mighty and mysterious mental combination Paulus also saw a sweetness so inexpressibly awful that, at once

(and as if he had heard words formed within his own heart), the reflection arose within him: "How much more terrible would be the wrath of the lamb than the rage of the lion!"

And the figure of this person passed onward and was hidden from poor Paulus beyond the olive groves.

Our hero sat down on a jutting stone, half-covered with herbage, and fell into a vague and somewhat sorrowful meditation. "Poor Longinus!" said he to himself; "it is really the queerest and the most provoking thing in the world that perhaps the honestest, bravest, simplest, best fellow I ever knew should have fallen in love so much above his own rank. But can't I look at home? I am worse; I have let myself fall in love with a damsel who is prevented by the holy books of her people from marrying a Gentile. What a puzzle this world is! I should like to see poor Longinus once more. How broken-hearted he seemed when we all took wing from the castle on the banks of the Liris! 'Ah!' says he, when I met him in Rome afterward, 'perhaps we shall never meet again.'

"The best thing that could have occurred for him was that marriage of Agatha with Paterculus. But these thoughts are useless; I must fulfill Dionysius's commission, and write to him to say whether I have been able to discover in this mysterious land the presence, the memory, or so much as the expectation of any person whose name corresponds with that spelt out in the acrostic of Erythræa the Sibyl."

A rustle of the olives near him caused him to turn his head, and who, of all men in the world, should be at his side but Longinus, the centurion!

"Why," cried Paulus, "I thought you were at Rome!"

"I have just arrived, my general," returned the brave man, "with orders to report myself to Pontius Pilate, the Procurator of Judea, or Governor of Jerusalem. Cornelius, of the Italian band, also a centurion, as you know, my general, has been ordered to Cæsarea, and is there stationed."

"Well," said Paulus, "I am delighted to meet you again. How is Thellus?"

"Curiously enough," returned Longinus, "he, too, is here, stationed in Jerusalem. He was tired of too much quiet."

"Good!" exclaimed Paulus. "We must all often see each other, and talk of old days."

After a few more words interchanged, they began to descend Mount Olivet together.

"Did you meet any one," says Paulus to Longinus, "as you came up the hill?"

"I did," said Longinus very gravely; "but I know not who he is."

They proceeded silently in company till, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, at the bottom of the Mount of Olives, not far from the Golden Gate of the Temple, a most beautiful youth, with rich, fair locks, worn uncovered (like him whom Paulus had just seen), met them.

"Friends," quoth the stranger, "have you seen the Master coming down from the Hill of Olives?"

"I think," said Paulus, after a little reflection, "that I must have seen him whom you mean." And he described the person who had looked at him.

"That is he," said the beautiful youth. "Pray, which way was he going?"

Paulus told him, and the other, after thanking him, was moving swiftly away when Paulus cried after him:

"Stay one moment," said he. "What is the name of him you call *the Master*?"

"Know you not?" replied the youth with a smile. "Why, you are, I now observe your dress, a Roman. His name is *Iesus*."

"What!" cried Paulus. "Then it is a reality. There is some one of that name who has appeared among men, and appeared at this time, and appeared in this land. I will, this very day, send off a letter to Dionysius at Athens. And pray, fair youth, what is your own name?"

"Ah!" returned the other, "I am nobody; but they call me *John*. Yet," added he, "I ought not lightly to name such a name, for the greatest and holiest of mere men, now a prisoner of Herod's, is likewise called John; I mean John the Baptist, John the Prophet; yea, more than a prophet: '*John the Angel of God*.'"

"I am," returned Paulus, "invited to a great entertainment at Herod's palace, this evening. Tell me, why is John the Prophet a prisoner at Herod's?"

"Because he went on God's errand to Herod, to rebuke him for his incestuous marriage."

With this the youth went his way, and Paulus and Longinus went theirs.

CHAPTER XXIV.



T the golden gate of the Temple courtyard, a Roman legionary soldier (detailed as body-servant to the General Paulus) met him. The soldier was leading a small, wiry Tauric (or really Tartar) horse. Paulus, twisting a lock of the animal's mane in his left hand, and taking up with the little finger thereof the loop of the bridle, sprang on its back. The soldier smiled, as the still handsome and youthful-looking legatus settled himself on the back of his steed.

"Why are you smiling, my man?" quoth Paulus good-humoredly.

"It was like the spring I saw you take years ago at Formiæ, when I was a boy, upon the back of the horse Sejanus, which no man, my general, ever rode save you," replied the soldier.

"Ah!" said Paulus, smiling sadly; "were you there? I fear I am not so agile now. We are all passing away."

"Just as agile still, my general," returned the legionary, in a cordial tone; "but about twice as strong."

"Away! begone!" cried Paulus, laughing; "I am growing old." And shaking the reins, he waved a salute to Longinus, turned his pony round, and rode away again into the valley westward, while the centurion entered the city by the golden gate, and repaired under the walls of the Temple to Fort Antonio, where he was detailed as officer of Pilate's guard that night.

Paulus, meanwhile, rode slowly on his way, between the Kedron Brook and the walls of Jerusalem, till he came to the Pool of Siloam. There he turned south, galloped to a fort which was near, turned back again to his right, or northward, followed the valley of Hinnom at a walking pace, looking up at the white and dazzling buildings on Mount Zion.

As he slowly passed them, he speculated which could have been David's palace. He saw Herod's plainly enough. On his right he noticed the aqueduct from Solomon's Pool, and followed its course as far as the Tower of Hippicus northward. There he entered the city by the Gate of Gennath, and followed the valley of the Cheesemongers (or Tyropœon hollow) until he came to Ophel.

In the middle of a very narrow street in this low and crowded quarter, where the Romans afterward under Titus were repulsed, he met a file of people, some mounted, some on foot, led by a richly-dressed, haughty-looking, burly man, riding a mule.

So narrow was the street that either Paulus would have had to go back as far as the Tower of Mariamne, or the richly-dressed and haughty-looking man about one-quarter of the distance, to the bridge between the street of the Cheesemongers and the court of the Gentiles. Paulus, always full of courtesy, amenity, and sweetness, was in the very act of turning his small Tauric horse, when the burly man in rich dress, who led the opposing file, called out, "Back, low people! Back, and let Caiphas go by!"

"And who is Caiphas?" demanded Paulus, instantly facing round again and barring the way.

"The high-priest of Jerusalem," was the answer, thundered forth in rude and minatory tones.

"I respect," said Paulus, "and even revere that holy appellation; but he who uses it at this moment, for some present purpose, has flung against me, who am a Roman general, the mandate of *Back, low people*. Where are the low people? I do not believe that I am a low person. Where, then, are the low people?"

"Come on," cried the imperious voice of Caiphas.

He himself, being the file-leader, began then to move forward, till he came immediately in front of the traveler who had so courteously spoken to him.

"If you want," said Paulus, "to pass me at once, I must get into the ditch, or throw you into it; which do you prefer?"

"I prefer," quoth Caiphas, "that you should throw me into the ditch, if you either dare or can."

"Sir," said Paulus, "I am sorry for the sentiment you express, or at least imply. But I will stand up against your challenge of throwing you into the ditch, because I both could do it, and dare do it, as a Roman soldier, only that there is ONE among you who has come to settle all our disputes, and who has a divine right to do so. For his sake I would rather be thrown into that drain by you—soldier, officer, general, and Roman as I am—than throw you into it."

"Let me pass," cried Caiphas, purple with rage.

Paulus, whose behavior at Lake Benacus against the Germans, and previously at Formiæ, and afterward in the terrible Calpurnian House on the Viminal Hill, the reader remembers, made no answer, but, riding back to the Tower of Mariamne, allowed the high-priest and his

followers there to pass him, which they did with every token of scorn and act of contumely that the brief and sudden circumstances allowed. Caiphas thus passed on to his country-house at the south-west-by-south of Jerusalem, where he usually spent the night.

Paulus then put his pony into a gallop, and soon reached the bridge across the Tyropœon, into the courtyard of the Temple, commonly called the courtyard of the Gentiles. Such was the nervous excitement caused by his recent act of purely voluntary, gratuitous, and deliberate self-humiliation, that he laughed aloud as he rode through the Temple yard, coasting the western "cloisters," and so reaching Fort Antonio.

There his servant, the Roman legionary, who had before met him at the golden gate, and whose name was Marcus, was awaiting him.



CHAPTER XXV.

THAT night the palace of Herod the tetrarch resounded with music, and all the persons of rank or distinction in Jerusalem were among the guests. The entertainment would have been remembered for years on account of its brilliancy; it was destined to be remembered for all ages, even till the day of doom, on account of its catastrophe, chronicled in the books of God, and graven in the horror of men.

Paulus, unusually grave, because experiencing unwonted sensations, and anxious calmly to analyze them, was assailed for the first time in his life by a feeling of nervous irritability, which originated (though he knew it not) in his having suppressed the natural desire to chastise the insolence of Caiphas that morning. He sat abstracted and silent, not far from the semi-royal chair of Herod the tetrarch. His magnificent dress, well-earned military fame, and manly and grave beauty (never seen to greater advantage than at that period of life, though the gloss of youth was past) had drawn toward him during the evening an unusual amount of attention, of which he was unconscious, and to which he would have been indifferent.

The "beauty of the evening," as she was called (for in those days they used terms like those which we moderns use, to express our infatuation for the gleams of prettiness which are quenched almost as soon as they are seen), had repeatedly endeavored to attract his attention. She was royal; she was an unrivalled dancer.

Herod, who began to feel dull, begged her to favor the company with a dance, *sola*. Thereupon the daughter of Herodias looked at Paulus, to whom her previous blandishments had been addressed in vain (he was well known to be unmarried), and heaved a fiery sigh. The mere noise of it ought to have awakened his notice, and yet failed to accomplish even that small result. Had it succeeded, he was exactly the person to have regarded this woman with a feeling akin to that which, some two-and-twenty years before, she herself (or was it Herodias? they age fast in the East) had waked in the bosom of his sister under the veranda in the bower of Crispus's inn, leading out of the fine old Latian garden near the banks of the Liris.

She proceeded to execute her *ballet*, her *pas seul*, her dance of immortal shame and fatal infamy. Cries of delight arose. The creature grew frantic. The court of Herod fell into two parties. One party proclaimed the performance a perfection of elegance and spirit. The other party said not a word, but glances of painful feeling passed among them. The clamorous eulogists formed the large majority. In the silent minority was numbered Paulus, who never in his life felt such grave disgust or such settled indignation. He thought of his pure and innocent Esther—alas, *not* his! He thought that, had it been his sister Agatha who thus outraged every rudimentary principle of the tacit social compact, he could almost find it in his heart to relieve the earth of her.

Thus pondering, his glance fell upon Herod the tetrarch. The tetrarch seemed to have become delirious. He was laughing, and crying, and slobbering, and clap-

ping his hands, and rolling his head, and rocking his body on the great state cushion under the canopy, where he "sat at table." While Paulus was contemplating him in wonder and shame, the wretched dancer came to an end of her bounds. Indecency, scientifically accidental, had been the one simple principle of the exhibition. Herod called the practised female before him, and, in the hearing of several, bade her demand from him any reward she pleased, and declared upon oath that he would grant her demand. Paulus heard the answer. After consulting apart with her mother, she said she desired the head of a prisoner upon a dish.

"What prisoner?"

"John," said she.

Paulus gazed at the miserable tetrarch, "the quarter of a king," not from the height of his rank as a Roman general, but from the still greater height which God had given him as one of the first, one of the earliest of European gentlemen. He knew not then who John was. But that any fellow-creature in prison, not otherwise to be put to death, should have his head hewn off and placed upon a dish, because a woman had tossed her limbs to and fro in a style which pleased a tetrarch while it disgraced human society, appeared to Paulus to be less than reasonable. What he had said, the tetrarch had said upon oath.

A little confusion, a slight murmuring and whispering ensued, but the courtly music soon recommenced. Paulus could not afterward tell how long it was before the most awful scene he had ever witnessed occurred.

A menial entered, bearing, on a large dish, a freshly-severed human head, bleeding at the neck.

"It was not a jest, then," said Paulus, in a low voice to his next neighbor, a very old man, whose face he remembered, but whose name he had all the evening been trying in vain to recall—"it was not a base jest, dictated by the hideous taste of worse than barbarians!"

"Truly," replied the aged man, "these Jews are worse than any barbarians I ever saw, and I have seen most of them."

Paulus recognized at these words the geographer Strabo.

At a sign from Herod, the menial carrying the dish now approached the daughter of Herodias, and presented to her the bleeding head. She, in turn, took the dish and offered it to Herodias, who herself bore it from the room with a kind of snorting laugh.

Paulus rose slowly and deliberately from his place near the tetrarch, at whom he steadily looked.

"This, then," said he, "is the entertainment to which you have invited a Roman legatus. You are vexed, people say, that Pilate, the Roman governor of this city, could not honor your birthday by his presence in your palace. Pilate's local authority is, of course, greater than mine, for I have none at all; but his real, permanent rank, and your own real, permanent importance, are contemptible by the side of those which a Roman soldier of such a family as the Æmilian has gained on the field of battle; and it was a high honor to yourself to succeed in bringing me hither. And now, while disgracing your own house, you have insulted your guests. What is the name of the man you have murdered because a woman dances like a goat? What is his name?"

The tetrarch, astonished and overawed, replied with a bewildered look :

"What authority to rebuke me, because I took my brother's wife, had John?"

"John who?" asked Paulus, who from the outset had been struck by the name.

"He who was styled John the Baptist," said the tetrarch.

The words of another John rang in Paulus's memory; and he exclaimed :

"What! John the Baptist? John the Baptist, yea, and more than a prophet—John the Angel of God! Is this he whom you have slain?"

"What had he to say to my marriage?" answered Herod, through whose purple face a livid under-color was penetrating to the surface.

"Why," exclaimed Paulus, "the holy books of your own nation forbade such a marriage, and John could not hear of it without rebuking you. I, although a Gentile, honor those books. Out upon you, impious assassin! I ask not, where was your mercy, or where your justice; but where has been your sense of common decency, this evening? I shall never cease to lament that I once stood under your roof. My presence was meant as an honor to you; but it has proved a disgrace to myself."

Taking his scarlet cloak, he flung it over his shoulders, and left the hall amid profound silence—a silence which continued after he had quitted the courtyard and begun to descend from Mount Zion to the labyrinth of streets branching downward to the Tyropœon Valley. In one of these, under a bright moonlight, he met

that same beautiful youth whom he had seen in the morning at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

"Stay!" cried Paulus, suddenly stopping in his own rapid walk. "Said you not, this morning, that he who was called 'John the Baptist' was more than a prophet? Herod has this moment slain him, to please a vile woman. The tyrant has sent the holy prophet out of life."

"Nay; into life," replied the other John; "but, brave and noble Roman—for I see you are both—the Master, who knows all things, and rejoices that John has begun to live, grieves as well."

"Why grieves?" inquired Paulus, musing.

"Because," replied the other John, "the Master is verily man, no less than *He is Who is*."

"What, then, is he?" asked Paulus, with a look of awe.

"He is the Christ, whom John the Prophet, now a witness unto death, had announced."

Hereupon the two went their several ways, Paulus muttering: "*The second name in the acrostic.*"

But, really, he had ceased to care for minor coincidences in a huge mass of convergent proofs all gaining possession of his soul, and taking alike his will and his understanding captive—captive to the irresistible truth and the equally irresistible beauty of the message which had come. The immortality of which he was an heir, the reader has seen him long since believing, and long since also rejecting both the pantheism of the philosophers and the polytheism of the vulgar. And here was a great new doctrine authoritatively establishing all that the genius of Dionysius had guessed, and infinitely

more, truths awful and mysterious, which offered immediate peace to that stupendous universe that is within a man, while assuring him of power, joy, and honor to begin some day, and nevermore to end.

He had not been in Jerusalem long before he learnt much of the new teaching. He had secured for his mother, close to the Fortress Antonio, where he himself lodged, a small house belonging to a widow who, since her husband's death, had fallen into comparative poverty. The Lady Aglais, attended still by her old freed-woman, Melena, was allowed the best and coolest part of this house entirely to herself, with a staircase of their own leading to the flat roof. There they passed much of their evenings after the sun had set, looking at the thickly-built opposite hills, the mansions on Zion, or down into the Tyropœon from which the hum of a great multitude came, mellowed by the distance, and disposing the mind to contemplation. Many wonderful things, from time to time, they heard of him who was now teaching—things some of which, nay, the greater part of which, as one of the sacred writers expressly declares, never were recorded, and the whole of which could not be contained in the libraries of the world. It may well, then, be imagined in what a situation Paulus and his mother were—having no interest in disbelieving, no chair of Moses to abdicate, no doctoral authority or pharisaic prestige inciting them to impugn the known truth—in what a situation they were, for accepting or declining what was then offered.

After twenty years of separation, a trace of Esther had been recovered by Paulus. One evening, his mother was on the flat roof of her residence awaiting his cus-

tomary visit, when her son appeared and alarmed her by his pallor. He had seen Esther on foot in a group of women at the Gate of Gennath, going forth into the country, as he was entering the city on horseback. Aglais smiled sadly, saying: "Alas! dear son, is that all? I long since knew that she still lived; but I would not disturb your mind with the useless intelligence."

"Scarcely altered," murmured Paulus abstractedly, "while I am quite old. Yes, she must now be past thirty; yes, near thirty-five."

"As to that," said the mother, "you are thirty-eight, and scarcely seem twenty-nine. Old Rebecca, the mistress of this house, who lives still in the ground-story as you are aware, has told me much about Esther."

"She is married, I suppose," said Paulus, with a look of anxiety.

"No," replied Aglais. "She has had innumerable offers (spite of her comparative poverty), and has declined them all."

"But what boots it?" exclaimed Paulus.

"Old Josiah Maccabeus is dead," said Aglais. And here they dropped the subject by mutual consent.

The dreadful days, closed by the most awful day the world has known—closed by the ever memorable and tremendous Friday—came and went. On the Saturday, Paulus met Longinus, who said he had been on Mount Calvary that afternoon, and that he, Longinus, was now and ever henceforth a disciple of him who had been crucified. The Sunday came, and brought with it a prodigious rumor, which, instead of dying out, found additional believers every day. The disciples, most of whom had shown themselves as timid as they

were known to be ignorant, now seemed transformed into new characters, who loudly affirmed that their Master had risen from the dead by his own power; and they were ready to face every torment and all terrors calmly in the maintenance of this fact, which they predicted would be received and acknowledged by the whole world. And, indeed, it was no longer a rumor, but a truth, attested by the only witnesses who could by possibility know anything about it, either for or against; and whose earthly interests it would have been to deny it, even while they knew it to be true—witnesses who, if they knew it to be false—and they certainly knew whether it were true or false (this much was granted, *and is still granted*, by all their opponents)—could have had no motive, either earthly or unearthly, for feigning that they believed it.

So pregnant is this simple reasoning, that a man might ponder it and study it for a whole month, and yet find fresh strength and an ever-increasing weight in the considerations which it suggests; not even find a flaw if he made the one month twelve. Paulus's mind was determined, and so was his mother's. The son sought that same beautiful youth whom he had seen twice before; told him the new desire, the new belief, which had made his mother's and his own heart glad; and by him they were baptized as Christians, disciples of him that had been crucified—by that fair youth, I say, who was to be known for ever among men as Saint John the Evangelist.

"After all, mother," said Paulus, when they were returning together to her dwelling, "it is not so very mysterious; I mean that difficulty about the lowliness of


our divine Teacher's chosen place among men. Because, see you, if the builder of those glorious stars and that sublime firmament was to come at all amongst us, he would be certain to take the lowest and smallest lot, lest we should deem there was any difference as before him. We are all low and small together—the earth itself, I am told, being but a sort of Bethlehem among the stars; but, anyhow, we are but mites on a blade of grass in his sight; and had he taken a great relative place amidst us, it might countenance the lie and the delusion of our silly pride. That part of it is to me not so mysterious, although I don't wonder at the Jewish notion that their Messiah was to have been a great conquering prince—that is probably what the Antichrist will be. It would suit the blindness of vanity better."

As he spoke the words, they heard a quick footstep behind, and were overtaken by Longinus, who, saying he had just heard of their reception, greeted them with every demonstration of rapturous affection.

"Now," pursued he, walking by their side, "good for evil to Master Paulus's family. Forgive the apparent intrusion, dear general, if I mention that I happen to know the story of your youthful love, as all the world have witnessed your fidelity to an unavailing attachment. But learn from poor Longinus that Esther Macabeus is now a disciple; and the Christian maiden can wed, under a still holier law, the brave Gentile whom the Jewess was bound to refuse."

With this he turned into an alley under the court of the Gentiles, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NE still and sultry evening, the decline of a brooding day in spring, two persons were sitting on the flat roof of a house in Jerusalem. They were the Athenian Lady Aglais and her son, the comparatively youthful Roman general—he who has so largely figured, even from his gallant boyhood, in the events and affairs we have been recording.

It was the 30th of March, and a Wednesday—the first of all Easter-Wednesdays—the first in that new and perpetual calendar by which throughout the fairest regions of earth, among all enlightened nations and civilized races, till the crash of doom, time was for evermore to be measured.

A servant, carrying a skin-cask slung over his shoulders, was watering the flowers, faint with thirst; and these, arranged in fanciful vases, which made an artificial garden of the housetop, shook their drooping heads under the fresh and grateful shower, and seemed to answer it with smiles of a thousand blooms and rays. As the man stole softly to and fro about the roof, now approaching the lady and her son, now receding, he seemed, in spite of the foreign language in which they spoke, and in spite of the low and hushed tone they observed, to follow, with intense and breathless though stealthy excitement, the tenor of their conversation; while his figure, in the last evening rays, cast a long, shifting shadow that streaked with black the yellow flood to its farthest limit, climbed the parapet, broke upon its

grail-work of balusters, and then was beheaded, for it flung off its head out of sight into empty space, leaving the calm, bright air unblotted above the stone guard-wall.

An occurrence took place of which (that Wednesday evening) Paulus and his mother were witnesses—an occurrence in dumb show, the significance of which they were destined, only after several years, to learn; yet the incident was so singular, so strange, so impressive—it was such a picture in such a quarter—that when, long subsequently, the explanation came, they seemed to be still actually assisting in person at the scene which, while they beheld it, they had no means of understanding. We are going, in one moment, to relate that occurrence; and we must here request the reader to grant us his full belief and his confidence when we remark that, in comparison of his amusement, his profit, and that mental gallery of pictures to be his henceforth (which we try to give to all who honor these pages with a perusal), we feel the sincerest contempt for any mere display of scholarship or learning. For this reason, and this reason alone, and certainly from no scantiness, and still less from any lack of authorities, we shall almost disencumber our narrative of references to the ancient writers and recondite documents (such as the *Astronomic Formula of Philip Aridaeus*) which establish as positive historical facts the more striking of the occurrences still to be mentioned. In one instance the intelligent reader will discern that the most sacred of all evidence supports what we have to record. But if we were to show with what nicety of precision much profane, yet respectable and even venerable, testimony accords with the passage

here meant in the Acts of the Apostles, and how abundantly such testimony corroborates and supplements the inspired account, this book would cease to be what it aims at being, and would become a historical treatise of the German criticism school.*

Satisfied, therefore, with the foot-notes below (at which the reader will oblige us by just glancing, and which are appended, in perfect good faith and simple honesty, as implying no more than we could make good), we will avoid boring those who have a right to, and who expect, the conclusion of a straightforward story at our hands.†

Paulus and his mother were conversing, as has been described, in Greek, while the servant, despite his ignorance of that language, had the air of following the drift of what they said, and of catching the main purport of it with wonder and awe. There was, indeed, at that moment, only one topic in all Jerusalem. He

* If any one should feel astonished at our insisting not only upon the exact day, but the very hour, when certain things occurred, let him or her remember that the calculation of eclipses, passing backward from one to another (as though ascending the steps of a staircase), reaches and fixes the date—yes, the precise minute of day—when incidents took place between which and us the broad haze of twice a thousand years is interposed.

† For the rest, in support of the matters we have too briefly to recount, we could burden these pages with voluminous, and some of them most interesting and beautiful, extracts from both heathen and Christian works of classic fame and standard authority; with passages of direct and indirect evidence from Josephus, Phlegon, Plutarch, Saint Dionysius (our own true hero, the Areopagite of Greece, the St. Denis of France) [*ad Apollophanem*, epis. xi., and *ad Polycarpum Antistilem*, vii.]; Tertullian (*Cont. Jud.*, c. 8); St. Augustine (*Civ. Dei*, lib. 14); St. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Joanne Baptista*); the Bollandists, Baronius, Eusebius, Tillemont, Huet, and a host of others. But our statements will not need such detailed "stabilisation," because the facts, being notorious among scholars, will be impugned by no really educated man of thoroughly competent critic.

who, less than a week ago, had been crucified, and with the time of whose coming (as much as with all the particulars of his life, teaching, works, and death) the old prophecies were found more and more startlingly, circumstantially, unmistakably, the more they were studied, questioned, and canvassed, to agree, point by point, down to what would seem even trivial details (indicated as if merely to emphasize the incommunicable identity of the Messiah)—he had himself stated, distinctly and publicly, that, by his own power, he would rise from the dead in three days; that, in three days after, he should be “lifted up” and be made “a spectacle for men and angels”; in three days after they should have destroyed it, he would rebuild the holy temple of his body. And now these rumors—these minute, these positive accounts—had he, then, really reappeared, according to his word and promise? Was it possible? Was it the fact?

Many had, on the previous Friday night, stated that, of a verity, they had seen their deceased parents and relatives. Again, on the Saturday, many declared, amid awe-stricken groups of listeners, that the unknown land had sent them its visitants, in various places, under various aspects, to startle the guilty city; which, after killing the King’s messenger-servants, had just killed the King’s Son, who had come, as had been a thousand times announced, in the very fullness, the exact maturity of days, to deliver the final embassy to men.

On that Wednesday evening, there was, in truth, but one theme of conversation, one subject of thought, all through Jerusalem, and already far beyond Jerusalem; among poor and rich, high and low, natives and stran-

gers, the robbers of the Syrian hills and Arabian deserts, the dwellers in the city, the travellers on the roads and at the inns, among Sadducees, Pharisees, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, and barbarians.

No wonder, then, if the humble serving-man, as he watered the flowers, penetrated the drift of the mother's and the son's discussion. For him and such as he was the message. The poor Syrian had once, for a while, rendered occasional out-door service to the family of Lazarus; and he had known Lazarus in three states—had known him living, dead, again alive. After days of death in that fierce climate, where inanimate flesh putrefies fast, he had beheld Lazarus, at the call of one upon whose lineaments he gazed, at the time, with unconscious adoration, come forth, not merely from death, but from incipient decomposition, back into balmy life—back to the “*vita serena*.”

Now, was he who, in that instance, had allowed it to be perceived and felt that he was really the Lord of life, whom death and rottenness were manifestly unable to disobey—was he himself, as his disciples declared he was, living again among them, since the morning of the last Sunday (the *feria prima*), according to his own public prediction and distinct promise? Was he not? Was he?

Aglais and Paulus had heard more than one circumstantial account of this, his reappearance, according to that, his promise. By this one and by the other he had been met. They had gazed upon him, spoken to him, heard him in reply, touched him, in such a place, on that bridge, that road, in such a garden. He had walked conversing with them, had sat with them at

meat, had broken bread with them, as was his wont, had then vanished.

Where was his body, over which the Pharisees had set their guard of soldiers? Not in the grave. No; but where? Had the Pharisees accounted for it? Could they tell what had become of it? Could the soldiers? The disciples could, and they did.

"Mother," said Paulus, "do you know what those soldiers say? One of them once served in a legion which I commanded. Do you know what they say?"

"You mean," replied Aglais, "about their inability to hinder the abstraction. What?"

"That an act to which they are the only witnesses could not be stopped by them, because of it they were not witnesses, being buried in sleep."

"Consistent," said the Greek lady. "Yes; but a much weightier fact is that expectation of the disciples, to prevent the realization of which the Pharisees set their guard."

"What expectation? And why weightier? What can be weightier?" asked the general.

"That their Master would keep his word, and fulfill his prediction of rising from the tomb on the third day. If they saw him again alive within the promised time, they and the people would worship him as God; but, if the Pharisees could show the body on the third day, or could even account for it, that belief would die."

"Clearly," answered Paulus, "the disciples expected to see him again on and after the third day, waiting for his word to be fulfilled."

"Now, Paulus," pursued Aglais, "suppose this expectation of theirs not fulfilled; suppose that not one of

those waiting for his word was conscious of any reason for believing it to have been realized——”

Paulus interrupted his mother.

“There is only one possible way in which they could be induced to believe it realized—namely, that he should be seen again alive.”

“Quite so,” she resumed. “But suppose that he has not been seen; suppose that not one of those who expected to see him again has thus seen him. How would they then feel on this Wednesday morning?”

“They would feel that the expectation which he had solemnly and publicly authorized them to depend upon, was idle and vain; they would not and could not by any possibility feel that they had, in this great particular, reason to consider his word to have been kept. They would be discouraged to the very last degree. They would, of course, hide themselves. I would do so myself, and I believe I am no coward. In short, they would feel no reason to hope in his protection, or to expect that his other and still mightier promises concerning their own future eternal life would by him be realized. They would not incur any inconvenience, or brave any danger, or take any trouble, or risk any loss——”

It was Aglais’s turn to interrupt.

“Now, is this their attitude?” she inquired.

“The reverse, the opposite, the contradictory of their attitude.”

The lady continued in a low tone: “If, expecting, upon his own assurance, that some among them should see him,” she asked, “not one of them had seen him, would they, at this moment, have any motive for bring-

ing upon themselves the tortures, insults, shame, and death which he underwent, and all this in order to induce others to believe apparitions and a resurrection which in their own hearts they did not themselves believe, and for believing which they were, moreover, conscious that they possessed no ground, no reason, no pretext ? ”

A sweet, ringing, vibrant voice at their side here said:

“ And in order by deliberate circumstantial lying, of an awful and blasphemous kind, to please the God of truth ; and to compensate themselves by his protection above, in a future life, for the present and immediate destruction which they are incurring among the Pharisees and the men of power here below ! ”

Looking round, they beheld Esther of the Macca-bees.

Never had she seemed to Paulus so beautiful ; but there was a marked change ; for, however intellectual had always been the translucent purity of that oval brow, through which, as through a lamp of alabaster, shone the vivid mind within, there was now the mysterious effluence of “ that Essence increate ” who had come to abide in, and had strangely transfigured the appearance of, the faithful-souled Hebrew maiden. And when Paulus, after she had embraced his mother, abstractedly took her hand, his heart was lifted upward with a species of wonder ; and, without adverting to it, he was asking himself to what marvelous kingdom she had become heiress, in what supernal court of everlasting joy and unassailable prerogatives was this beautiful creature destined to live, loving and beloved.

almost the glories which she reflected, dispensed, and multiplied, as if from some holy, mysterious, and spiritual mirror.

“O dear Lady Aglais! and O legatus!” she said, with a gesture amazing in its expressiveness and pathetic fervor (she had brought the finger-tips of both hands together under the chin, and then lowered them with the palms outward toward her hearers, and so she stood in an attitude of the utmost grace and dignity combined, like one appealing to the candor and good faith of others)—“O dear friends! I was just now passing through my own garden on my way hither, when, under the fig-tree (where he used to sit poring over the holy books of our people), I beheld my dead father, but standing, and not in his old accustomed wicker-chair; and he gazed upon me with large, earnest eyes; and as he stood, his head almost touched the leaves of that hollow, embowering fig-tree; and he was pale, so extremely pale as he was never during life; and he called me: ‘Esther,’ he said, and his voice sounded far away. Ah! my God, from what a huge distance it seemed to come! And lo! lady, and thou, legatus, he said these words to me: ‘I have been in the vast, dim house, and have seen our Father Abraham; and I have seen our great Lawgiver, and all our prophets, excepting only two, Elias and Enoch; and I asked, Where were they? And in all the dim, vast house none answered me, but the forefinger was pressed to the silent lips of those who there waited. And, suddenly, there was the noise of innumerable armies coming swiftly from afar—but your ears are mortal and your eyes veiled, and were I even permitted to tell you that which shook, beyond

this little world, the large world and its eternal thrones, your mind would not at present understand my words. Enough, Esther, that I have been allowed to renew to you, in my own behalf, and that of others among our people who have been called before you to the vast, dim, silent city, the exhortation which our ancestor Judas Maccabeus sent with offerings to the high-priest; namely, that you will pray for our spirits. Our innumerable company has just been thinned; the glorious Judas Maccabeus, our ancestor, and that holy mother of the Maccabees, and almost all who were waiting with me in the dim, vast kingdom of expectation, have gone forever; and I, and a few, have been commanded to expect yet a little time; until the incense of holy prayer shall have further gone up in the presence of the Great White Throne.' ”

Esther paused, her eyes dilated, and stood a moment with the hands again brought together; and so perfect a figure of truthfulness, and such an impersonation of sincerity she looked, that the Jewish servant, who understood not a word of the tongue in which she addressed the Greek lady and her son, gazed at her, his work suspended, his cask held high in air, with all the marks of one who heard and accepted some sacred and unquestionable revelation.

“Go on, dear child,” said Aglais. “What further?”

“I asked the pale image what this meant, that he should term the condition in which he is waiting and has yet to wait a little time—that vast, dim, condition—‘a house,’ ‘a city,’ and ‘a kingdom.’ ‘The dwellers,’ he replied, ‘are watched in that kingdom by silent protectors, mighty and beautiful, whose faces, full of a se-

vere, sad love, are the torches and the only light those dwellers ever see; and the vast, dim city has a sunless and a starless sky for its roof, under which they wait; and that sky is the ceiling which echoes the sighs of their pain; and thus to them it has been a kingdom, and a city, and a house; and, until the ninth hour of last Friday they were numerous as the nations of men! 'And at the ninth hour of that day,' I asked, 'O my father! what occurred when so many departed, and you and a small number were left still to wait?' And he gazed at me for an instant with a wan and wistful look; then, lo! I saw nothing where he had been standing under the fig-tree."

"But it was at the ninth hour of the last Friday the Master had expired by the side of the penitent who was that very day to be with him in paradise!" cried Aglais.

At Esther's arrival, Paulus and Aglais had both risen from a kind of semicircular wicker settle which occupied one of the corners of the roof; and they now, all three, when Esther had finished her strange, brief narrative, leaned silent and musing against the parapet, where, under the shade of a clustering rhododendron, they had a view westward (drawn, as people are who ponder, toward whatever object is most luminous) of the towers and palaces and pinnacles of the Holy City, then reddening in the sunset. One word respecting the spot where the little group was thus collected and concerning its peculiar scenic effects.

The roof was an irregular parallelogram, protected on all sides by a low, thick parapet, at two opposite corners of which, in the diagonals, were two doors of masonry, bolted with massive round bars of iron, or left open,

thus excluding or admitting communication with the contiguous houses. The writer, many years ago, saw such parapet doors on the housetops of modern Algiers ; nor was the arrangement unknown in the more famous Eastern cities of antiquity, where the roofs glowed with plants in vases. When, on some public occasion, the passages were opened, the richer inhabitants, far above the noise, dust, squalor, sultriness, and comparative darkness of the narrow and noisome streets, could stroll and lounge for miles, in mid-air, among the flowers ; could cross even flying and embowered bridges (of which a privileged number possessed the keys) ; and so Dives, unseen of Lazarus, but seeing far down all things little and supine, could wander through parterres of bloom, and perfumed alleys, and shrubberies of enchantment, with effects of sunlight sprinkled, so to speak, with coolness and with shadows, soothed out of the noonday fierceness into tints various and tender ; unsoiled of the strains and pains that stained and pained the poor sordid world below ; until the hearts of those who thus promenaded amid circumstances of such delicious refinement and luxury, bearing and hearing news, and exchanging civilities, were "lifted up," and became even like to the heart of Nabuchodonosor, the king. Sometimes the dulcimer, or the fingered lyre of six strings, made long-forgotten airs of music beguile the declining day, and linger for hours longer, ravishing the night under the stars of the Syrian sky. Such the scene.

But none of the roof-doors were open that Wednesday evening. Something ailed the Holy City. Out of the hushed heavens, mysteries and a stern doom were brooding over Jerusalem. Already the fermenting germ

of those dreadful factions which were to tear to pieces, with intestine rage, the whole Jewish body, while the city was writhing in the vain death-struggle against Titus, a few years later, had begun to make itself sensible to the observant. A fierce hatred of the Romans and an insane eagerness to reëstablish the old Jewish independence had taken possession of certain youthful fanatics; and "possessed," indeed, they seemed. On the one side the Roman officers of the garrison, from Pilate down, had received anonymous warnings, in the wildest style, requiring them to withdraw from Jerusalem within a given time, or they should be all executed in the streets, as opportunity might occur; on the other, the prefect of Syria had been earnestly requested by Pilate to strengthen the garrison; while in the city itself the soldiers were strictly admonished to keep to their quarters, to avoid late hours, and to hold no intercourse when off duty with the inhabitants. Leaves of absence were stopped. A few legionaries had been already murdered in the neighborhood of wine-shops, in the small winding alleys, and in places of evil repute, and no efforts succeeded in identifying the perpetrators.

But these were only the feeble and evanescent symptoms, destined to disappear and reappear, of a political and social phase which was not to become the predominant situation until another situation should have exhausted its first fury. This, the first, was to be the war of the Synagogue against the disciples of the Messias, whom those disciples went about declaring to have risen from the tomb, according to his distinct promise; whom they declared to have been already seen, and heard, and touched by themselves, again and again.

No wonder, then, if Aglais and Paulus and Esther had discussed in hushed tones, and in Greek, the wonders and various portents attendant upon the supreme and central fact—that Resurrection of the Master, which absorbed their whole hearts and minds, leaving no room for any other interest therein at this tremendous epoch—the grand turning-point of human destinies and of our whole planet's history.

From the parapet against which they were leaning, they now gazed in silence upon the splendid scenes below and opposite. Across a maze of narrow streets they saw the mansions, the pinnacles, the towers, and that great supernal "Temple of God," all so soon to perish violently, in a general, a complete, and an irreversible destruction. They saw the play of light and shadow upon one long tree-lined side of Herod's proud palace; they saw the ripple of quivering leaves reflected upon the white colonnades and tessellated, shady floors of Pilate's fatal house; and, while revolving thoughts and questions of unspeakable importance and solemnity, they suddenly beheld an acted picture, a passing scene, voiceless to them, yet impressive, which blent itself into their recollection of other scenes, never to be effaced from the memory of mankind, which, not a week before, had been under those very colonnades enacted.

A woman in the attire of a Roman matron came quickly forth upon the first-story balcony in the house of Pontius Pilate, and, leaning over the rail, waved her hand with an imperative gesture to some one below.

She was followed into the balcony more slowly by a man wearing the grand costume of an ancient Roman military governor, who held in his hand a sealed and

folded letter, tied with the usual silk string. The man was evidently Pilate himself. He looked long and gloomily at the letter, and seemed to be plunged in thought. He even let what he carried fall at his feet, and did not appear to be aware of this for some moments. It was the woman who picked up the letter, and gave it back into his hand. Then Pilate leaned over the balustrade, in his turn, and spoke to a man below in military costume, who was mounted on a powerful horse, and seemed to be equipped for travel. The soldier saluted, looking up, when he was addressed, and saluted again when his superior had ceased speaking; whereupon Pilate dropped the letter (a large and heavy dispatch), which the soldier caught and secured under his belt, inside the tunic, immediately afterward riding away at a canter. Our three friends saw Pilate, his head bent and his eyes on the ground, slowly re-enter the house by a screen-door, the same through which he had come out upon the balcony; but the lady, clasping her hands a little in front of her forehead, gazed into the heavens with a face ashy pale, and with eyes from which tears were streaming.

It is a well-known and for centuries universally received tradition, besides being a fact recorded by one most respectable and trustworthy author (who, besides, was not a Christian, but a Jew)—a fact without which the allusions to it in various ancient authorities, together with Phlegon the Chronologer's subsequent recital of Tiberius's extraordinary conduct, would be unintelligible and unaccountable—that Pontius Pilate, harassed by the unappeasable reproaches of his wife, and stung by something within his own bosom which


allowed him peace no more, until (sleepless, and unable again, unable for ever, to sleep) he bequeathed, some years afterward, by an awful death, whether intentional or not, his name to a great Alpine hill, a hill not thenceforth named, or to be named, while time and mountains last, by any name but "Pilate's" among distant and then barbarous nations—it is well known, I say, that Pilate sent to Tiberius Cæsar a long and minute relation concerning the life, the death, and the disappearance from the tomb of Him whom he had scourged, and whom the Jews had crucified, together with a notice of the supernatural wonders wrought by Him; His previous notorious announcement of His own intended resurrection; the directly consequent and equally notorious precautions taken to hinder it; the disappearance, in spite of this, of the body; the testimony of the soldiers that they were witnesses *to* the abstraction, which they were unable to stop, because they alleged that they were not witnesses *of* it (being buried in sleep); that, in fact, their testimony proved nothing save the body's disappearance from the massively-sealed tomb (which would have stood a small siege); the failure of the Synagogue to account for the body; the account of it by the disciples; and, finally, the admissions of the Pharisees that all their prophets had become unexplainable if this was not their Messiah, yet that such a conclusion was to them impossible, because He was to have been their king, and a conquering king, and to have founded an empire extending through all nations and tongues; their stern and ever-growing disaffection to the Roman rule; the universal amazement, excitement, and anxiety arising from the circumstance that,

while neither the Synagogue nor the soldiers could throw any light upon what had become of the body, the disciples of Him who had predicted His own resurrection explained the event openly and fearlessly by stating that they had again and again met Him since the previous *feria prima*; that they cared for no protection except His alone; that the dead was once more among them—living, and henceforth immortal—their Master and God, the ultimate Judge of this world, and the foretold Founder of an everlasting kingdom! Pilate added several strange and astounding particulars.

This, in a general way, is known; and it is likewise known that Tiberius Cæsar was so deeply-impressed by the dispatch of the Jerusalem governor, arriving in his hands about the same moment, as we shall find in the next chapter, when a strange incident (*narrated by Plutarch*) took place, that he suddenly convened the senate in a formal indiction, and *proposed to them to raise a temple to Christ, and to rank Him solemnly among the gods of the empire!* But not such nor of such acknowledgments was to be the kingdom of the “jealous” and the only God.

Aglais, Paulus, and Esther had assisted at a memorable pantomime. They had beheld the mounted soldier who rode with a memorable letter to the seacoast; they had seen the vain effort of him who had offered the people a choice between Barabbas and “the desired of nations,” to call the great of the earth into his perplexities, to quiet his awakened conscience, to turn aside from the dread warnings whispered to his soul, to lull—by futile means—an all too late remorse.

CHAPTER XXVII.

 IN our last chapter, Paulus and his mother had obtained through Esther's recital of her waking dream or vision, one little glimpse at that prison, that place of detention, which she had termed (as she herself had heard it termed) "the dim, vast house," "the vast, dim city," and the "dim, vast kingdom."

The vague notion she could give of that scene of immurement cannot be expected to prove interesting to so large a number as Mr. Pickwick has caused to feel an interest in his glimpses of the "Fleet Prison," once famous in London. But such interest as the former house of detention commands is of a different kind, and those who may experience it are a different class. Plato (as a great critic observes) has been translated from age to age into some dozen great modern languages, in order that he might be read by about a score of persons in each generation. But that score are the little fountains of the large rivers that bear to the sea the business of the world. Few are directly taught by Kant, Sir William Hamilton, John Stuart Mill, Cousin, or Balmes ; but the millions are taught and think through those whom *they* have taught to think. Between the good and evil originators or conservators of ideas, and the huge masses who do all their mental processes at third hand, stand the interpreters ; and these listen with bent heads, while they hold trumpets which are heard at the extremities of the earth.

Paulus lingered in Jerusalem. Weeks flew by. Spring passed into summer ; summer was passing into autumn ; and still, from time to time, as, in the evenings, mother and son sat among the flowers on the flat roof, Esther would join them.

One night, she had hardly appeared, when Longinus the centurion followed her, bearing a letter for Paulus, which, he said, had just arrived at Fort Antonio, by the hands of an orderly, from the governor. The letter was from Dionysius of Athens, now *l'un des quarante*, a member of that great Areopagus of which the French Academy is partly a modern image ; and it was written immediately after his return from a tour in Egypt, and a cruise through the Ægean Sea, among the famous and beautiful Greek Islands, to resume his duties as a teacher of philosophy and a professor of the higher literature at Athens.

Paulus, after a word with his mother and Esther, desired Longinus to favor them with his company. Sherbets and other refreshments were brought. They all sat down on the semicircular wicker settle at the corner of the roof, under the bower-like branches of the large rhododendron ; a small lamp was held for Paulus by the Jewish serving-man, and Paulus read the letter aloud to that sympathetic group. Extracts we will give, in the substance, concerning two occurrences. The first, as the reader sees, the listening circle learned from Dionysius ; but *we* have it in reality from Plutarch, upon whose narrative Eusebius and many other weighty authorities and grave historians have commented.

The captain and owner (for he was both) of the vessel in which Dion sailed back from Egypt to Athens was

an Egyptian of the name of Thramnus (some call him Thamus). He said that a very weird thing had happened to him in his immediately previous trip, which had been from Greece to Italy. Dion was at the time at Heliopolis, in Egypt, with his friend, the celebrated philosopher Apollophanes, who, though (like Dion himself) only between twenty and thirty, had already (in this also resembling Dion) obtained an almost world-wide fame for eloquence, astronomical science, and general learning. When Thramnus had neared the Echinades Islands, the wind fell, a sudden calm came, and they had to drop anchor near Paxos. The night was sultry; every one was on deck. Suddenly from the lonely shore, a loud, strange voice hailed the captain: "Thramnus!" it cried. None answered. Again, louder than human, came the cry, "Thramnus!" Still none answered. For the third time, "Thramnus!" was thundered from the lonely coast. Then Thramnus himself called out: "Who hails? What is it?" Shrill and far louder than before was the voice in reply: "When you reach the Lagoon of Pelodes, announce then that the great Pan is dead."

Thereupon, everything became silent, save the sluggish wash of the waves under the vessel's side. A sort of council was at once held on board; and first they took a note of the exact date and the hour. They found that it was exactly the ninth hour of the sixth *feria*, or day, in the month of March, in the fourth year (according with Phlegon's corrected and checked astronomical chronology) of the two hundred and second Olympiad: in other words, this being translated into modern reck-

oning, means, six in the afternoon of Friday, the 25th of March, in the thirty-third year of our Lord.

Dion breaks off in his letter here to remark : " You will learn presently what happened to me and to Apollophanes, and to the whole renowned city of Heliopolis, at the same hour exactly of that same day ; and it is the coincidence between the two occurrences which has fixed them so deeply in my mind."

Well; he proceeds to say that Thramnus, having asked his passengers, who happened to be unusually numerous, whether they considered he ought to obey this mysterious mandate, and having suggested himself that, if, on reaching Pelodes, the wind held fair, they should not lose time by stopping, but if the wind were there to fail, and they were forced to halt at that place, then it might be no harm to pay attention to the injunction, and see what came of it, they were all unanimously of his opinion. Thereupon, as though by some design, in the midst of a calm the breeze sprang up freshly again, and they proceeded on their way. When they came to the indicated spot, all were again on deck, unable to forget the strange incident at Paxos, and, on a sudden, the wind fell, and they were becalmed.

Thramnus, accordingly, after a pause, leaned over the ship's side, and, as loudly as he could, shouted that *the great Pan was dead*. No sooner had the words been pronounced than all round the vessel were heard a world of sighs issuing from the deep and in the air, with groans and moanings, and long wild, bitter wailings innumerable, as though from vast unseen multitudes, and a host of creatures plunged in dismay and despair. Those on board were stricken with amazement and terror. When

they arrived in Rome, and were recounting the adventures of their voyage, this wild story sent its rumor far and near, and made such an impression that it reached the ears of Tiberius Cæsar, who was then in the capital. He sent for Thramnus and several of the passengers, as Plutarch records for us, particularly one, Epitherses, who afterwards, at Athens, with his son Æmilianus, and the traveller Philip, used often to tell the story till his death. Tiberius, after ascertaining the facts, summoned all the learned men who chanced then to be in Rome, and requested their opinion.

Their opinion, which is extant, matters little. The holy fathers who have investigated this occurrence are divided in their views. It must be remembered that Plutarch relates another truly wonderful fact universal in its range, as being notoriously simultaneous with the singular local adventure above described—the sudden silence of Delphi, and all the other famous pagan oracles, from the 8th day before the Kalends of April, in the 202d Olympiad, at six P.M. At that hour, on that day (March 25, Friday, Anno Domini 33), those oracles were stricken dumb, and never more returned answers to their votaries. Coupling these phenomena together, in presence of a thousand other portents, the holy fathers think, one party of them, that the enemy of man and of God, and that enemy's legions, were grieving and wailing, at the hour which Plutarch specifies (the time of evening, and on the very day, when our Lord died), at the redemption just then consummated; others, that the Almighty permitted nature "to sigh through all her works," in sympathy with the voluntary sufferings of her expiring Lord.

"Now, hearken," proceeded Dion in his letter, "to how I was occupied, hundreds of miles away, in Heliopolis, at the time, the very hour of the very day, when so wild and weird a response came from the powers of the air and the recesses of the deep to those who shouted forth, amid a calm on the silent breast of the Ægean Sea, that the great Pan ('the great All,' 'the universal Lord,' as you, my friends, are aware it means in Greek) had died !

"I had gone out, shortly before the sixth hour on this sixth day, to take a stroll in the tree-shaded suburbs of Heliopolis, with my friend Apollophanes. Suddenly, the sun, in a horrible manner, withdrew its light so effectually that we saw the stars. It was the time of the Hebrew Pasch, and the season of the month when the moon is at the full, and the period of an eclipse, or of the moon's apparent conjunction with the sun, was well known not to be then ; independently of which, two unexampled and unnatural portents, contrary to the laws of the heavenly bodies, occurred : first, the moon entered the sun's disc *from the east* ; secondly, when she had covered the disc and touched the opposite diameter, instead of passing onward, *she receded*, and resumed her former position in the sky. All the astronomers will tell you that these two facts, and also the time of the eclipse itself, are equally in positive deviation from the otherwise everlasting laws of the sidereal or planetary movements. I felt that either this universal frame was perishing or the Lord and Pilot of nature was himself suffering ; and I turned to Apollophanes, and, 'O light of philosophy, glass of science !' I said, 'explain to me what this means.'

"Before answering me, he required that we should together apply the astronomical rule, or formula, of Philip Aridæus ; after doing which with the utmost care, he said : 'These changes are supernatural ; there is some stupen-

dous revolution or catastrophe occurring in divine affairs, affecting the whole of the Supreme Being's creation.'

"You may be sure, my friends, that we both took a careful note of the hour, the day, the week, month, year; and I intend to inquire everywhere whether in other lands any similar phenomena have appeared; and what overwhelming, unexampled event can have taken place on this little planet of ours to bring the heavens themselves into confusion, and coerce all the powers of nature into so awful a manifestation of sympathy or of horror."

He ended by conveying to Aglais and Paulus the loving remembrance of the Lady Damarais.

Aglais and her son and Esther were spellbound with amazement when his letter had been read; and Paulus exclaimed:

"What will Dion say when he hears that we also saw this very darkness at the same moment; that the veil of the Temple here has been rent in twain; and that he who expired amid these and so many other portents, Esther, and in the full culmination of the prophecies, is again living, speaking, acting, the Conqueror of death, as he was the Lord of life?"

"Let us go to Athens; let us bring our friends, the Lady Damarais and our dear Dion, to learn and understand what we have ourselves been mercifully taught."

So spoke Aglais, offering at the same time to Esther a mother's protection and love along the journey. Paulus was silent, but gazed pleadingly at Esther.

It was agreed. But in the political dangers of that reign, Paulus, owing to his fame itself, had to take so many precautions that much time was unavoidably lost.

Meanwhile, he had again asked the Jewish maiden to become his wife. Need we say that this time his suit was successful? Paulus and Esther were married.

Christianity in the interim grew from month to month and from year to year, and our wanderers had but just arrived at last in Athens in time to hear, near the statue of "the unknown God," while Damarais, the friend of Aglais, and Dion, the friend of them all, stood near, a majestic stranger, a Roman citizen, him who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the glorious Apostle of the Gentiles, who had been "faithful to the heavenly Vision," though he had not seen the Resurrection, explain to the Athenians "him whom they had ignorantly worshiped." And when the sublime messenger of glad tidings related the circumstances of the Passion, the scenes which had been enacted in Pilate's house (so well remembered by them), the next day's dread event, and when he touched upon the preternatural accompaniments of that final catastrophe, and described the darkness which had overspread the earth from the sixth hour of that day, Dionysius, turning pale, drew out the tablets which he carried habitually, examined the date of which, at Heliopolis, he and Apollophanes had jointly made note, and showed symptoms of an emotion such as he had never before experienced.

He and Damarais, as is well known, were among the converts of Saint Paul on that great occasion. How our other characters felt we need not describe.

Yielding to the entreaties of their beloved Dionysius, they actually loitered in Greece for a few years, during which Christianity had outstripped them and penetrated to Rome, where it was soon welcomed with fire and

sword, and where "the blood of martyrs became the seed of Christians." Esther shuddered as she heard names dear to her in the murmured accounts of dreadful torments.

Resuming their westward course, how Paulus rejoiced that he had in time sold everything in Italy, and was armed with opulence in the midst of new and strange trials! They gave Italy a wide offing, and passing round by the south of Germany, with an armed escort which Thellus (who had also become a Christian, and had, while they were in Greece, sent for Prudentia) commanded, they never ceased their travels till they reached the banks of the Seine; and there, undiscernible to the vision of Roman tyranny in the distance, they obtained, by means of the treasures they had brought, hundreds of stout Gaulish hands to do their bidding, and soon founded a peaceful home amid a happy colony. Hence they sent letters to Agatha and Paterculus.

Two arrivals from the realms of civilization waked into excitement the peaceful tenor of their days. Paulus himself, hearing of the death of Paterculus, ventured quickly back to Italy, in the horrible, short reign of Caligula, and fetched his sister Agatha, now a widow, to live with them. Later still, they were surprised to behold arrive among them one whom they had often mourned as lost to them forever. It was Dionysius. He came to found Christianity in Gaul, and settled, amidst the friends of his youth, on the banks of the Seine. Often they reverted, with a clear light, to the favorite themes of their boyhood; and often the principal personages who throughout this story have, we hope,

interested the reader, gathered around that same Dionysius (who is, indeed, the St. Denis of France), and listened, near the place where Notre Dame now towers, to the first Bishop of Paris, correcting the theories which he had propounded to the Areopagus of Athens as the last of the great Greek philosophers.*

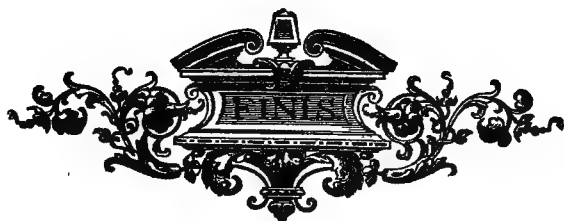
One other arrival greeted, indeed, the expatriated but happy settlement. Longinus found his way among them; and as the proud ideas of a social system upon which they had turned their back no longer tyrannized over Aglais or Paulus, the brave man, biding his time

* The Roman Breviary thus speaks of St. Dionysius :

"Dionysius of Athens, one of the judges of the Areopagus, was versed in every kind of learning. It is said that, while yet in the errors of paganism, having noticed on the day on which Christ the Lord was crucified that the sun was eclipsed out of the regular course, he exclaimed: 'Either the God of nature is suffering, or the universe is on the point of dissolution.' When afterward the Apostle Paul came to Athens, and, being led to the Areopagus, explained the doctrine which he preached, teaching that Christ the Lord had risen, and that the dead would all return to life, Dionysius believed with many others. He was then baptized by the apostle and placed over the church in Athens. He afterward came to Rome, whence he was sent to Gaul by Pope Clement to preach the Gospel. Rusticus, a priest, and Eleutherius, a deacon, followed him to Paris. Here he was scourged, together with his companions, by the Prefect Fescennius, because he had converted many to Christianity, and, as he continued with the greatest constancy to preach the faith, he was afterward stretched upon a gridiron over a fire, and tortured in many other ways; as were likewise his companions. After bearing all these sufferings courageously and gladly, on the ninth of October, Dionysius, now more than a hundred years of age, together with the others, was beheaded. There is a tradition that he took up his head after it had been cut off, and walked with it in his hands a distance of two Roman miles. He wrote admirable and most beautiful books on the divine names, on the heavenly and ecclesiastical hierarchy, on mystical theology, and a number of others."

The Abbé Darvas has published a work on the question of the identity of Dionysius of Athens with Dionysius, first Bishop of Paris, sustaining, with great strength and cogency of argument, the affirmative side. The authenticity of the works which pass under his name, although denied by nearly all modern critics, was defended by Mgr. Darboy, Archbishop of Paris.—ED. C. W.

and watching his opportunities, found no insurmountable obstacles in obtaining a fair reward for twenty years and more of patient and unalterable love. He and Agatha were married.



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